

Bloomberg Spares Education Department from Budget Cut

By Anna M. Phillips

Feb. 2, 2012

For the first time in three years, New York City teachers are not being threatened with layoffs, “unless something dramatic happens,” Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg said, announcing his preliminary budget on Thursday.

Last year, the mayor’s preliminary budget threatened the jobs of 4,500 teachers, part of an effort to absorb large funding cuts from the state, as well as the end of federal stimulus funds. But as in 2010, the 2011 teacher layoffs never evolved beyond a threat, and were eventually taken off the table through negotiations with the city’s teachers union.

On Thursday, the mayor said that the city’s finances remain under stress, but while he has planned to cut money for other agencies, he is increasing financing for the city’s Department of Education. The city’s budget documents project the department’s total budget (including pensions and debt) increasing to \$24.6 billion in 2013, up from \$24.1 billion in 2012.

With the city’s fixed costs going up every year, it was not immediately clear what impact the increase in financing would have in the classroom. In fact, as has occurred for the last five years, the overall budget can increase while principals, who now manage their own budgets, are given less money for staffing and other expenses.

Ultimately, the budget must be approved by the City Council, which is likely to make its own adjustments to it.

Although the mayor did not discuss his proposal to give teachers who are rated “highly effective” for two years a \$20,000 salary increase, he reiterated the importance of paying the city’s teachers enough to remain competitive with other school districts.

The mayor’s budget does make cuts to some aspects of education, which immediately drew criticism from advocates, who said the preliminary budget does away with thousands of daycare and after-school slots.

According to Public Advocate Bill de Blasio, roughly 16,000 daycare seats would be lost if the mayor does not increase funding to the Administration for Children’s Services. And though exact numbers have varied,

groups like the Center for Children’s Initiatives and the United Neighborhood Houses have estimated 25,000 positions lost in the city’s Out-of-School Time program, an after-school program that opened under Mayor Bloomberg.

“The Mayor’s cuts to after-school programs sadly continues a multi-year trend of cutting programs for the children in our City that need them most,” said the Children’s Aid Society’s president, Richard Buery in a statement. “After-school program slots have already dropped from 85,000 to 27,000 in the past three years alone. These programs keep our neediest kids on track for college graduation — the one sure pathway out of poverty.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/schoolbook/2012/02/02/bloomberg-spares-education-department-from-budget-cut/>



NYC mayor: Use last rainy-day funds in budget plan

By Samantha Gross

Feb. 3, 2012

NEW YORK — New York City should scrape dry the last of its rainy-day funds to balance next year's budget without new cutbacks or taxes, Mayor Michael Bloomberg said Thursday as he unveiled a \$68.7 billion budget proposal that anticipates billions of dollars in deficits in years to come.

"We spent years planning ahead, making government more efficient and saving for a rainy day," the mayor said of the \$6 billion the city put aside in the more flush days of his administration. "Thank goodness we had the reserve."

While the mayor announced no new cuts in his plan for the fiscal year beginning July 1, the proposal relies in part on a series of reductions announced earlier that could shutter 20 fire companies, slice library funds and leave tens of thousands of low-income parents without city-sponsored child care.

Some of those services have in past years been saved by the City Council's discretionary funds, which last year totaled \$386 million. The mayor's budget proposal is traditionally the first step in a lengthy process of revisions and wrangling involving policymakers, elected officials and advocates. The final deal will require the approval of the City Council.

On Thursday, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn praised the mayor for avoiding tax hikes and deep spending cuts, but called the reductions for libraries, after-school programs and other services "troubling."

Public Advocate Bill de Blasio joined advocates in objecting to funding and program shifts that could cut 41,000 of 146,000 low-income children from the city's child care and after-school programs. He estimated it would take \$150 million to keep the children in the programs.

"If you're not investing in early childhood education you are going to have fewer kids succeed in our public schools, fewer kids with an education for the modern workforce," he said. "It's inexplicable to me."

The mayor said the city was taking realistic and responsible measures — increasing the city's capital budget and avoiding the layoffs of teachers, police officers and firefighters.

"We just can't do everything," he said. "People understand we live in a more difficult time."

Last year, the mayor's initial budget plan called for cutting thousands of city teachers. The layoffs would have been the city's first public school pink slips since the economic crisis of the 1970s. But the final budget reduced the teaching force only through attrition — dropping an estimated 2,600 teachers from the rolls.

In November, city officials signaled they were anticipating a \$2 billion shortfall. On Thursday, the mayor said that gap was closed in part through higher-than-expected tax revenues and lower-than-expected health care costs.

But Bloomberg warned that the city would have no reserve funds to depend on in future years. Estimates put the budget deficit at \$3 billion in the fiscal year beginning July 2013, \$3.5 billion the following year and \$3.4 billion the year after that.

The mayor decried the city's pension costs, which at about \$8 billion a year make up more than one-eighth of the city budget. After rising from \$1.3 billion in 2002, the city's pension costs are expected to level off in the coming years. Bloomberg is supporting a highly contested effort by the governor to institute a more modest pension tier for future employees.

http://www.boston.com/news/education/k_12/articles/2012/02/03/nyc_mayor_use_last_rainy_day_funds_in_budget_plan/

The New York Times

As Fiscal Cloud Lifts, Mayor Offers a Budget Free of Tax Increases or Broad Layoffs

By David W. Chen

Feb. 2, 2012

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, seeking to stabilize New York City's finances after years of budget crunches and economic woes, proposed on Thursday a spending plan that was as routine and as free of drama as any in recent memory, with no tax increases or layoffs of teachers, police officers or firefighters.

Even the most contentious elements of Mr. Bloomberg's proposed budget — his plans to close 20 fire companies and slash millions of dollars in funding for libraries and after-school programs — had a veneer of the familiar, given that he had proposed similar cuts last year.

The budget he proposed — \$68.7 billion for the fiscal year that begins July 1 — is about 2 percent higher than the budget for the current year. The budget is balanced, as is required by law.

"No tax increase, no layoffs of teachers or uniformed workers and no walking away from our long-term investments," Mr. Bloomberg said during a budget briefing at City Hall. The most colorful element of his proposal was his blue V-neck sweater — a nod, he said, to the Super Bowl-bound Giants.

Mr. Bloomberg said costs that the city could not control, like those of pensions, health care, Medicaid and debt service, would increase by \$2 billion, or 7.5 percent. But he said he would balance the budget in part by drawing on money from a health care reserve fund and money expected from the sale of new taxi medallions. City expenditures would shrink by \$437 million.

The mayor's budget relies on a \$29 million increase in revenue from fees and fines. He would increase fees for street activity permits, generating nearly \$1 million, he said. And he would establish a new fee for building inspections from the Fire Department, generating an expected \$8.4 million.

Mr. Bloomberg also projected that the Finance Department would increase tax revenue by \$25 million through more aggressive auditing of high-end tax returns.

The budget did not include many of the proposals that had caused controversy in previous years. Last year, for instance, Mr. Bloomberg proposed to lay off 5,400 teachers, 5 percent of all teachers, setting off a tense battle with the City Council and other parties. Ultimately, a deal was reached that averted layoffs.

Mr. Bloomberg also seemed much less anxious about the city's future financial health on Thursday than he had in previous years. Indeed, when asked whether he was concerned about a projected deficit of \$3 billion in the fiscal year following his new proposal, he said: "I don't know. It's a year away. I'm always optimistic."

But the mayor used the occasion of his proposal to repeat a familiar warning: that the city's pension costs have skyrocketed in recent years and are now a "ticking time bomb." Although he did not mention that his own generous contracts to labor unions had compounded those costs, he did praise, on several occasions, the efforts of Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo to control the costs.

"Now is the time to help the governor," he said.

The city's elected officials reacted guardedly to Mr. Bloomberg's proposal. Some said they were relieved that there would be no layoffs of teachers or uniformed officers, though the mayor did propose 140 layoffs, chiefly in the transportation and health departments. Others expressed concern that the mayor did not propose to raise taxes on the wealthiest as a way to spare cuts to programs that benefit the poor.

The City Council speaker, Christine C. Quinn, citing concerns about proposed cuts to firehouses, cultural institutions and after-school programs, said in a statement, "We are fully committed to protecting the essential services that New Yorkers depend on."

John C. Liu, the city comptroller, commended the mayor for avoiding layoffs but cautioned that "the use of short-term financial maneuvers doesn't reduce real cost but simply defers costs to future administrations."

And James Parrott, deputy director and chief economist of the labor-backed Fiscal Policy Institute, said he liked the city's audit initiative, but said the mayor was shying away from tackling difficult issues, like poverty.

"What it reflects, I think, more than anything else is that the mayor is just running out of gas," he said. "The budget itself is in good enough position that there's not a budget crisis, but the mayor is also not initiating anything to address some of the lingering problems that are out there."

Mr. Bloomberg's proposal is the first step in the annual budget process, which requires hearings and a vote by the City Council. The mayor is also expected to update his budget proposal in May, after the Legislature makes the state budget final.

The budget presentation on Thursday was Mr. Bloomberg's 11th as mayor, and he was very much in charge.

When, in an unscripted moment, he struggled to locate on his PowerPoint slides a statistic about education spending, his longtime budget director, Mark Page, found it and got up from his seat to point it out. Mr. Bloomberg brushed him aside.

"I can do it," he said.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/03/nyregion/mayor-bloombergs-budget-avoids-tax-rises-or-broad-layoffs.html? r=2&ref=nyregion>

Bloomberg's Budget Plan Includes Cuts to Fire Companies, Childcare Programs

By Jill Colvin

Feb. 2, 2012

CITY HALL — Mayor Michael Bloomberg presented a budget proposal Thursday that despite being far less painful than in previous years, still included a host of controversial cuts, including fire company closures and the elimination of tens of thousands of child-care slots.

The \$68.7 billion budget, unveiled at City Hall, includes no new teacher layoffs and no additional cuts from those laid out when the administration previously updated its budget in the fall.

"It has no tax increases, no layoffs of teachers or uniformed workers, and no walking away from our long-term investments," said the mayor, who credited prudent fiscal planning for avoiding more draconian cuts.

The administration also got a lifeline from the city's Independent Actuary's office, which has recommended decreasing the rate of return for the city's pension investment fund from 8 to 7 percent. But instead of forcing the city to cover the difference at once, the actuary proposed a plan that would spread the cost over 22 years, saving \$400 million dollars per year in previously anticipated costs.

While the recommendation appears to be a hail mary for the coming year, Bloomberg, who sounded somewhat uneasy with the plan, warned the city wasn't off the hook.

"That is an obligation we have just transferred to our children," he said.

Bloomberg also pointed to rising pension costs as a dire threat to the city's finances, warning it has a "ticking time bomb" on its hands.

The city's pension rate has increased nearly 500 percent over the past decade, he said, noting that the cost of paying pensions for the city's uniformed workers and teachers for the first time will exceed the compensation being paid to current employees.

"We just don't have much time left to fix the problem," the mayor said, warning that the 2014 budget is especially worrisome, with an expected gap of \$3 billion between projected expenses and revenues, and no rainy-day fund left to pay the bills.

Critics, however, focused in on the cuts, saying they were dismayed to see fire companies back on the chopping block and so many child-care slots at risk.

“Why throw so many kids overboard? It makes no sense,” said Public Advocate and presumed mayoral candidate Bill de Blasio, who said that 16,000 day-care seats were set to be eliminated, in addition to thousands of after-school slots, bringing the total to 40,000 fewer kids served.

“It’s inexplicable to me that they’re singling them out in this manner,” he said, calling it a “double-whammy” for low-income families struggling to hold down jobs and raise their kids.

City Councilwoman Elizabeth Crowley, chair of the Fire and Criminal Justice Services Committee, warned the plan to shutter 20 fire companies would put New Yorkers at risk.

“Closing even a single fire company in New York City will lead to increased response times, more fire fatalities, and millions of dollars in property damage,” she said.

In previous years the council has kept the companies from closing by adding funding later in the budget process.

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn cited the firehouses, as well as major cuts to libraries, after-school programs and the Chief Medical Examiner’s office, as her top concerns.

She also said the budget relies too much on fees and fines for revenue-raising.

“We shouldn’t be harassing business and property owners with frivolous violations to bring in more revenue,” she said.

Even before the budget details were announced, City Council members and advocates were rallying on the steps of City Hall.

Upper West Side City Councilman Ydanis Rodriguez, who was among those in attendance, said the mayor has repeatedly balanced the budget on the backs of the poor and middle class, calling for new streams of revenue in place of cuts.

“We need to share the sacrifice,” said Rodriguez, who said he was especially concerned about firehouse and library cuts.

“What we see today is the beginning of the conversation,” he said.

The mayor’s budget announcement typically kicks off a heated round of budget hearings and rallies before his office and the City Council agree on a deal by the end of June.

Quinn’s office said the hearings will begin the week of March 5.

<http://www.dnainfo.com/20120202/manhattan/bloombergs-budget-plan-includes-cuts-fire-companies-childcare-programs#ixzz1lKbTrZBC>



Bloomberg presents a relatively optimistic budget, with a taxi-revenue catch

By Dana Rubinstein and Azi Paybarah

Feb. 2, 2012

Mayor Michael Bloomberg presented a preliminary budget for the 2013 fiscal year today that is, compared to past budgets, a relatively painless one.

It closes a \$2 billion gap without raising taxes or explicitly calling for layoffs, made possible in part by reductions to city-agency budgets and a stabilizing economy. (Bloomberg said the city has regained 65 percent of the private-sector jobs lost during the recession, compared to 36 percent in the rest of the country.)

"The bottom line is I think it is a responsible budget," said the mayor. "I think it is a realistic budget."

One big catch is that the mayor's budgeting is based on the assumption that the city will reap some \$1 billion in revenue from the sale of 2,000 wheelchair-accessible taxi medallions. That's optimistic, particularly in light of a recent court ruling that Bloomberg's own legal department has said puts that money in jeopardy.

Those 2,000 yellow taxi medallions are a key component of the mayor's outer-borough taxi plan, on which a grand compromise was reached in December. The plan calls for the creation of 18,000 special permits allowing livery cars to pick up street hails, 20 percent of which would be wheelchair-accessible, and the auction of another 2,000 yellow taxi medallions, all for wheelchair-accessible vehicles.

While the Assembly has passed the compromise, known as a chapter amendment, and the Senate is set to vote on it as early as Monday, the city cannot move forward with the overall plan until both the governor's office, and a district court judge, say so.

Only after the city submits, and the governor approves, a plan for the phasing-in of full accessibility for the taxi and limousine fleet, can the city sell more than 400 of the yellow taxi medallions. The city has yet to submit that plan.

Separately, a district judge has essentially forbidden the city from moving forward until the court receives and approves its own disability-access plan.

There are other reasons it might be premature to derive too much relief from the mayor's relatively painless \$70 billion budget, like the fact that, as the mayor pointed out, it was balanced by exhausting the city's rainy-day fund.

"What we've done is we've put about \$6 billion in the good years, and this year we are using up the last of that \$6 billion and we do not have a carry projected into 2014, nor do we have a reserve that we could apply if we wanted to," said the mayor.

"There is no more reserve," he later added. "We finally used up all of the reserve."

That may pose problems for next year's budget, and the ensuing ones, when Bloomberg will no longer be in office. He projected a \$3 billion budget gap for the 2014 fiscal year, a \$3.5 billion deficit for 2015, and a \$3.4 billion deficit in 2016.

The city's rising pension costs, said the mayor, are a big part of that. And he used the soapbox that is his annual budget address to hammer home the need for the sort of pension reform both he and Governor Cuomo are espousing.

That reform would create new, less-costly benefits-packages for yet-to-be-hired state and city workers.

"Right now our pension system is fairly described I think as a ticking time bomb," said the mayor. "And we are working in partnership with Governor Cuomo to defuse that time bomb. And I think Governor Cuomo deserves real credit for making it a top priority this year, because we just don't have much time left to fix the problem."

Pension costs, said the mayor, make up 16 percent of the city-taxpayer-funded portion of the budget, or one in ever six city taxpayer dollars. That's six times larger than they were 10 years ago.

"In the current fiscal year, we expect to cross a barrier that ought to really set off alarm bells for our taxpayers," said Bloomberg. "The total cost of pensions and fringe benefits for all city uniformed works is expected for the first time ever to be greater than the total wages that they earn. Just think about that."

The mayor's budget earned criticism from both the left and the right.

Nicole Gelinas, an economist with the conservative-leaning Manhattan Institute, criticized Bloomberg's use of "one-shot" revenues, including the retirement health care fund, to plug the city's operating deficit, projected to be \$1.3 billion this year.

"It's supposed to be a pension fund for health care costs, but instead, he's really using it as regular budgeting," said Gelinas, in City Hall after the mayor's presentation "That's not a good thing."

The mayor is also relying on help from Albany in order to avoid pain in his budget, according to Gelinas.

"Too much of this budget is dependent on the pension reform" which has to be approved by Governor Andrew Cuomo and state legislators, she said.

Most of the prospective 2013 Democratic mayoral field also piled on.

Notwithstanding the fact that Bloomberg proposed no teacher layoffs, Public Advocate Bill de Blasio said the mayor's plan to cut 16,000 day care and early-education seats for children is a sign that Bloomberg is done fighting major budget battles.

"I think he's coasting a bit," said de Blasio. "This is a business-as-usual budget. This is a bit of third-termitis."

Cutting child-care slots and proposing, for now, the closure of 20 fire houses puts Bloomberg "on the past of least resistance, politically," de Blasio said.

Council Speaker Christine Quinn, meanwhile, faulted the budget, in an emailed statement, for its "proposed use of fees and fines as revenue-raising tools. This is not their intended purpose and we shouldn't be harassing business and property owners with frivolous violations to bring in more revenue."

The proposed budget anticipates that revenues from more restaurant-inspection fines will grow from \$1.28 million in 2012 to \$3.84 million in 2013.

Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, another mayoral candidate, said, in a statement, that he has "serious concerns about cuts to day-care slots, fire stations and libraries both in the borough I represent and citywide."

But Councilman Domenic Recchia, who chairs the Council's Finance Committee, told reporters he thought the mayor, along with the City Council, has addressed long-term structural changes needed to keep spending under control, and said the mayor is only using \$1 billion of the health care fund in this year's budget.

When asked if he was troubled by the mayor using the health care fund for the city's operating costs, Recchia said, "No because we put it away when we had a surplus. Thank God we did. And now it's time for us to take part of it."

Shortly after the mayor gave his speech, his office put out a statement saying that he had pledged \$250,000 to Planned Parenthood, an organization he has long supported, to make up for a cut-off of grants from a breast-cancer advocacy group. The Planned Parenthood donation became national news, overshadowing the budget.

<http://www.capitalnewyork.com/article/politics/2012/02/5184253/bloomberg-presents-relatively-optimistic-budget-taxi-revenue-catch>



NYC mayor unveils budget with minimal layoffs

By Joan Gralla

Feb. 2, 2012

(Reuters) - New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg on Thursday unveiled a \$68.7 billion preliminary budget, closing a \$2 billion gap without raising taxes or laying off teachers or uniformed workers.

"We will spend less in virtually every area except schools" in fiscal 2013, he said in a televised address that stressed the urgency of cutting soaring pension costs.

"The bottom line, I think, is that it's a responsible budget," he said, insisting that he was working "to keep the city safe, to keep the city attractive and growing, and to continue to make the kinds of long-term investments that will keep this city growing."

Bloomberg, a political independent now in his third and final term, has regularly demanded that city agencies "do more with less." The new budget plan is partly balanced with the \$1 billion in cuts he ordered in November.

He defended the 11 rounds of spending cuts he has made over the last few years, saying the quality of city services has not been impaired. "It would be pretty hard to find many agencies that are not doing a heck of a lot of a better job than they did in 2002," he said.

A small number of non-uniformed workers will be laid off under the plan, he said. The city has cut its work force by 20,500 positions since 2002, largely via attrition.

Bloomberg last year had proposed laying off 4,000 teachers.

Although New York's tax revenue has staged a slow recovery from recession lows, Bloomberg remained cautious. The city likely will only get an extra \$111 million in the current fiscal year, he said, while revenue should rise \$278 million the following year.

"We expect the recovery of all the jobs lost in 2008 by the end of 2012," Bloomberg added.

The city-funded \$50.7 billion part of the budget plan is down 1.9 percent on a year-over year basis. The rest of the budget, funded by the state and federal governments, will rise by \$2 billion.

Spending on capital projects over the next five years would increase nearly \$700 million to \$39.4 billion under the plan.

New York City, along with many states, cities and towns, is struggling to afford workers' pension and health-care benefits. Bloomberg said the city's pension contribution will have soared nearly 500 percent to \$8 billion from fiscal 2002 to fiscal 2013.

"We are already paying out more in pension and health benefits than we do in salaries and it is going to get worse," he said.

The rest of the budget gap is being closed with \$1 billion from the sale of new taxi medallions.

Bloomberg's proposed budget plan is benefiting from a change in estimated pension costs. The city actuary's proposals for the cost of the \$110 billion pension fund came in at \$850 million less than the \$2 billion that was expected for this year and the following year.

The actuary's proposals include cutting the assumed investment rate of return to 7 percent from 8 percent, which raises the city's contribution. But the actuary's other recommendations will save the city \$850 million this year and the next year, instead of costing it \$2 billion.

Bloomberg said the estimated investment rate should be even lower. The fund over the past decade has only earned an average annual return of 5.6 percent, he said. An even smaller return rate would force the city to contribute more, sparing future taxpayers.

Several years ago, credit analysts applauded Bloomberg for being the first politician to set aside money for retiree health-care costs, which are expected to cost the city more than \$50 billion. But after taking \$1 billion out of the fund last year, he is withdrawing the remaining \$1 billion this year.

Comptroller John Liu, a Democrat, said the plan relies too much on one-shots -- steps that only raise money for one year.

Also under the plan, the city would lose 20 fire companies, a measure that drew fire from both the City Council speaker, Christine Quinn, and Public Advocate Bill de Blasio, both Democrats.

De Blasio also faulted the mayor -- whose signature issue is education -- for "refusing to invest the necessary resources in Head Start, universal pre-kindergarten and child care." And Quinn said she was concerned about major cuts planned for after-school programs, libraries and museums, and a reduction in the chief medical examiner's resources.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/02/us-newyork-budget-idUSTRE8112J820120202>



Bloomberg's Budget Proposal Avoids Layoffs, But Cutbacks Loom

By Grace Rauh

Feb. 2, 2012

For those who keep close tabs on budget plans from City Hall, it almost sounds too good to be true. Mayor Michael Bloomberg found a way to plug a \$2 billion budget gap without raising taxes.

Layoffs for teachers, firefighters, police officers and sanitation workers are also off the table.

"We've spent years planning ahead, making government more efficient and saving for a rainy day," said Bloomberg.

The mayor noted that the city has made several rounds of cutbacks over the last few years to soften the budget blow.

The outlook is also helped by some changes the mayor expects to be made to the city's pension bill. If they go through, the city will have an extra \$425 million to play with.

That said, the mayor did sound his usual alarm over the city's growing pension obligations. He said the city cannot afford to [offer](#) the same benefits to new employees going forward.

"Right now our pensions system is fairly described, I think, as a ticking time bomb," said Bloomberg. This year's preliminary budget may not merit the same dramatic headlines we've seen in years past, but that does not mean the council will accept it without a fight.

For starters, 25 companies are on the chopping block, and the budget slashes funding for libraries, cultural institutions and child care. Advocates say more than 40,000 [slots](#) in day care and after-school programs would be cut.

Even before the mayor presented his plan, some council members rallied outside City Hall. "We want to see a humane budget that really protects the most vulnerable and really protects the working poor in this city," said City Councilwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito.

Domenic Recchia, the chairman of the City Council's finance committee, said the budget proposal was better than expected. "It's balanced. It's fair. No teacher layoffs, which is a big win. No new taxes. So we'll see where we wind up with this," said Recchia.

The city's next fiscal year begins on July 1.

http://www.ny1.com/content/top_stories/155303/bloomberg-s-budget-proposal-avoids-layoffs--but-cutbacks-loom

WALL STREET JOURNAL

Budget Plan Has Less Pain

By Michael Howard Saul

Feb. 3, 2012

Mayor [Michael Bloomberg](#) on Thursday released a \$68.7 billion preliminary budget proposal that City Council members described as far less painful than previous years, with no tax increases and no calls to lay off teachers or uniformed workers.

The mayor did propose eliminating funding for 20 fire companies, a familiar budget tack that has been opposed by lawmakers and the firefighters' union. In recent years, the council has succeeded in restoring funding for the companies ahead of the budget's approval in June.

While there are proposed cuts that sparked immediate concerns among lawmakers—including \$74 million slashed from city libraries, a \$41 million cut to cultural institutions and dropping city support for 8,000 privately provided child care slots as well as funding for another 24,000 after-school slots at city facilities—one council member briefed on the mayor's proposal described it as the "best" he's seen in three years.

Mr. Bloomberg's preliminary budget proposal is forecast at \$68.7 billion for the fiscal year starting July 1, up from the current \$67.4 billion budget. Expenses the city describes as controllable are forecast to decline by \$437 million, a 1.9% drop.

The proposed budget closes a \$2 billion gap without calling for any tax increases.

"Cities across the country have struggled to keep their heads above water—some have laid off teachers, police officers, and firefighters, and even a few have had to declare bankruptcy," Mr. Bloomberg said. "We have avoided those painful steps."

He described his budget as "responsible," saying the city continues to make spending cuts "while protecting the core services and investments that have helped make our city the place to be."

The biggest issue confronting the city's ability to balance the books is the cost of the pension system, which has increased to \$8 billion next fiscal year from \$1.3 billion in fiscal 2002, Mr. Bloomberg said.

The administration squirreled away \$6 billion when the economy was strong to help during tough fiscal times, but "this year we're using up the last of that \$6 billion," Mr. Bloomberg said. The administration estimates a \$3 billion deficit in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2013, and a \$3.5 billion gap a year later.

In November, the mayor released a plan to eliminate budget gaps that called for nearly \$1.5 billion in combined savings through June 2013. The administration is moving forward with the cuts outlined in that

plan, including more than 120 layoffs in the upcoming fiscal year, officials said. But unlike last year, when the mayor called for thousands of teacher layoffs and the elimination of thousands more via attrition, this budget doesn't call for any teacher layoffs.

Council Speaker Christine Quinn said she's concerned about the mayor's plan to close fire companies, plus the cuts to libraries, cultural institutions and after-school programs.

"We are fully committed to protecting the essential services that New Yorkers depend on," she said.

Public Advocate Bill de Blasio, pointing to the funding cuts to universal pre-kindergarten and child care, said the mayor's budget "hurts New York's children."

In response to criticism of the cuts to day care, the mayor said, "We just can't do everything."

Other lawmakers said they will seek to restore \$5 million in cuts to HIV/AIDS-related services and nearly \$50 million in cuts to the Administration for Children's Services child care budget.

The mayor appeared to throw cold water on a proposal from Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer to overhaul the city's income tax code. Mr. Stringer called for raising taxes on 0.5% of the wealthiest New Yorkers and reducing taxes for 95% of the city.

The mayor, a billionaire, said he's concerned the rich would flee the city.

Council Member Letitia James criticized the administration's budget briefing to the council as scare on detail. "I walked in not knowing much—I'm leaving not knowing much," she said. "Where's the beef?"

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203889904577199572607789052.html>



Mayor's Budget: No Tax Increases and No Layoffs of Teachers, Police Officers, or Firefighters

By Sam Levin

Feb. 2, 2012

Announcing the city's annual budget today, Mayor Mike Bloomberg said he would not be increasing taxes and he would not be laying off teachers, police officers, or firefighters. He said it multiple times. Runnin' Scared, watching a live feed of his announcement, counted at least three times. Can you hear him, folks? Just in case you missed it -- no new taxes and no layoffs for uniformed workers.

He [went over a lot of other stuff](#), too.

The preliminary 2013 budget is a \$68.7 billion plan with a city-funded portion of \$50.7 million.

The plan closes a \$2 billion budget gap without tax increases, Bloomberg said, speaking at City Hall. The city will spend less in virtually every major area, except for education -- where funds will again increase.

Updating reporters on the state of New York City's economy, he said that the city has regained 65 percent of private sector jobs that were lost during the recession, compared with a 36 percent gain nationwide. The city anticipates a recovery of all jobs lost in the downturn by the end of 2013 -- one year sooner than the rest of the country.

"Cities across the country have struggled to keep their heads above water -- laying off teachers, police officers, or firefighters, with a few even having to declare bankruptcy," he said at the start of the speech. "We have avoided those painful steps, I'm happy to say."

Bloomberg, [as expected](#), pushed for pension reforms that would create a new lower pension tier for future government workers. This is in light of projections that the city's pension costs in 2013 will be \$8 billion -- a 500 percent increase from 2002.

He said that it's "fairly described as a ticking-time bomb," and that the city needs to work with Governor Cuomo to diffuse the problem. "We just cannot afford to pay such costs," Bloomberg said. "That's simply not a sustainable course."

Preemptively angry electeds and nonprofit groups rallied this morning on the steps of City Hall, calling on the mayor to present a budget that is not balanced on the back of working- and middle-class New Yorkers. The press conference had an Occupy Wall Street theme, with speakers asking Bloomberg to consider the needs of the 99 percent by raising taxes instead of cutting needed services.

"The mayor said he needed a third term, which most New Yorkers weren't comfortable with, because of the creativity that he brings to the budget process. I hope that this new budget will mirror that," said City Councilmember Jumaane Williams. "I'm hoping the mayor [says]... 'I have heard the voice of the 99 percent,' and that is reflected in that budget."

"The City Council needs to flex its muscles if the mayor has not been the creative mayor he said he would be," Williams added.

Councilman Ydanis Rodriguez, frequently referencing OWS, added, "It is primarily those services which matter most to working and middle class New Yorkers that face the biggest cut every year with no real effort to find new ways to raise revenue."

Councilwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito -- [who may be eyeing the City Council speaker position](#) -- stopped by toward the end of the conference to apply some pressure on the mayor too and praise the Occupy movement.

"We want to see a humane budget that really protects the most vulnerable," she said. "We understand that the Occupy Wall Street movement has really infiltrated -- the message is infiltrating all over the country and in the city as well... As legislators that care -- as legislators here that represent the 99 percent -- we're saying that we're watching."

(On paper, i.e. press releases, City Council members Letitia James, Daniel Dromm, Mathieu Eugene, Fernando Cabrera, Sara Gonzalez, Robert Jackson, and Stephen Levin also supported the rally. We think [some of them might have been preoccupied with this](#)).

Post-budget announcement, we've gathered some reactions from angry pols and nonprofit groups that flooded our inbox. Below are some for your reading pleasure!

VOCAL-NY, an advocacy group, sent out an email after the budget criticizing the plan for its cuts to HIV/AIDS programs, including housing, nutrition, and prevention initiatives. (Wayne Starks, a VOCAL-NY board member at the rally this morning, had predicted he would be displeased: "Mayor Bloomberg is a coward because he only attacks the most vulnerable people.")

Public Advocate Bill de Blasio, a contender for mayor, criticized Bloomberg for not investing enough funds into early childhood programs, including Head Start, Universal Pre-Kindergarten, and child care. (De Blasio, [a loud critic of Bloomberg on many occasions](#), recently [clashed with the city over the issue of child fatalities](#).) His office later emailed out another statement, expressing concerns about proposed cuts to fire houses, linking to [a 2011 report that outlined the consequences of these kinds of closures](#).

Comptroller John Liu, another mayoral hopeful ([unlikely to succeed, according to Bloomberg](#)), emailed out a statement this afternoon praising the mayor for avoiding layoffs, but broadly criticized the budget strategy, saying, "The use of short-term financial maneuvers doesn't reduce real cost but simply defers costs to future administrations." (A full analysis will be released in coming weeks, his office says!)

City Council speaker Christine Quinn, another mayoral hopeful -- [who is sometimes criticized for too often agreeing with Bloomberg](#) -- didn't shy away from criticism today, [saying in a statement](#) that she was concerned about the closure of firehouses and cuts to libraries, cultural institutions, after-school programs, and the Chief Medical Examiner's office.

Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer -- yet another mayoral contender (who is giving his State of the Borough speech tonight) -- said basically the exact same thing as Quinn in his response statement: "I must express my serious concerns about cuts to day-care slots, fire stations and libraries both in the borough I represent and citywide."

http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninscared/2012/02/mayors_budget_2013.php



Bloomberg unveils FY 2013 budget to close \$2B deficit

Feb. 2, 2012

REUTERS

Mayor Michael Bloomberg pledged no tax hikes, but warned of skyrocketing pension costs and ballooning budget deficits in future years during a city budget proposal unveiled Thursday.

"Let me repeat, no tax increases, no layoffs of teachers or uniformed workers and no walking away from our long-term investments," Bloomberg said, presenting a \$68.7 billion budget for fiscal year 2013, which starts July 1.

The mayor, a political independent, has regularly demanded that city agencies "do more with less," and the new budget plan is partly balanced with \$1 billion of cuts he ordered in November.

The budget was not without its critics, including Public Advocate Bill de Blasio, who said it "hurts" New York's children. The proposed budget includes:

- Spending less in all departments except education, which has a \$24.6 billion budget that does not include the possibility of teacher layoffs - a point of contention for the past three years.
- A \$40 million reduction for fire companies, money that the City Council had previously restored.
- Covering \$8 billion in pension costs, a nearly 500% increase since 2002. To save money, Bloomberg wants the state to create a less costlier pension tier for future public employees.

<http://www.amny.com/urbanite-1.812039/bloomberg-unveils-fy-2013-budget-to-close-2b-deficit-1.3500257>

Mayor Bloomberg Touts Balanced Budget While Warning Of 'Ticking Time Bomb' In Pension Fund

By Hunter Walker

Feb. 2, 2012

Mayor Michael Bloomberg revealed his preliminary budget plan for the final months of the current fiscal year and fiscal year 2013, which begins in July at City Hall today. While he touted the balanced 2013 budget that closed a \$2 billion gap without tax increases, the mayor also warned of potential problems down the road if the pension system, which is not under city control, is not reformed.

"Right now, our pension system is fairly described as a ticking time bomb," Mayor Bloomberg said.

Mayor Bloomberg's budget is a \$68.7 billion plan including \$50.7 billion in funding from the city. The mayor repeatedly made the point New York has weathered the recession "better than most other places" and said his plan managed to avoid "painful steps" taken in other cities like bankruptcy and layoffs of teachers, firefighters and police officers. Mayor Bloomberg said his administration managed to balance the budget without raising taxes or making substantial changes to city services through "responsible spending cuts" to controllable city expenditures.

Under the mayor's proposal, year-over-year controllable city expenses for fiscal year 2013 were trimmed by \$437 million, a 1.9 percent drop from the current fiscal year. Expenditures not fully under city control, including health care, Medicaid, debt service and pensions rose by \$2 billion, a 7.5 percent increase from the current year.

Mayor Bloomberg said the city's pension costs have increased by six hundred percent in the past decade. Pension costs will increase \$575 million for the remainder of fiscal year 2012 and fiscal year 2013. Mayor Bloomberg said the increased pension costs are due to the city's Independent Actuary anticipating a one percent reduction in the rate of return for the pension fund due to the "uncertainty of the future economic outlook." The city reserved \$1 billion in fiscal year 2012 and fiscal year 2013 in anticipation of this change. This reserve funding enabled the city to take on the increased costs while still balancing the budget, however no more reserve funding is available for future budgets. Because of this, the mayor's four year financial plan includes budget gaps of approximately \$3 billion for fiscal year 2014, \$3.5 billion for fiscal year 2015 and \$3.4 billion for fiscal year 2016.

Governor Cuomo has made pension reform one of his top priorities for the coming year. Mayor Bloomberg, who went to Albany last week to testify about the issue before the Legislature, praised the governor for his efforts on pension reform and said they plan to work together on the issue.

“We are working in partnership with Governor Cuomo to defuse that time bomb,” Mayor Bloomberg said. “I think Governor Cuomo deserves real credit for making it a top priority this year, because we just don’t have much time left to fix the problem.”

Though no policemen, firemen or teachers will be laid off, there will be a reduction in the city’s workforce. Mayor Bloomberg said only “a small number of people” would be affected. The budget also cut funding to childcare and afterschool programs run by the Administration for Children’s Services and the Department of Youth and Community Development. Mayor Bloomberg’s budget does not include any new reductions in the number of firefighters, but the city is going forward with a plan outlined in 2011 to close twenty city firehouses. In the past, the mayor has defended the proposal by pointing out the fact much fewer buildings in New York are made of wood than were when many firehouses originally opened. Several of the politicians hoping to succeed Mayor Bloomberg next year quickly criticized the firehouse closures and childcare cuts.

Now that the mayor has unveiled his proposed budget, he and the City Council have until June to agree on a final budget plan. After the mayor’s presentation, Councilman Domenic Recchia, chairman of the Council’s Committee on Finance, spoke to reporters in the City Hall lobby. Though he said he’s still “examining” the mayor’s budget plan, Mr. Recchia said the cuts to childcare programs were the main element he initially found “disturbing.”

“The childcare issue is really disturbing. ... What they’re doing is saying the pre-k children, the four-year-olds, they should be over to the Department of Education,” Mr. Recchia said. “Is the Department of Education going to open up new pre-k slots? Are they going to increase the number of pre k slots? That is the big question.”

Overall, Mr. Recchia said the mayor’s proposal seems to be an improvement on past budgets.

“It’s a work in progress. We’re going to have our hearings on this, we’re going to start in March. We’re just reviewing everything, but the devil’s in the details and I’m examining it all and we’ll see what happens in the weeks ahead of us,” Mr. Recchia said. “But it was better than what I anticipated. ... It’s balanced, it’s fair, no teacher layoffs, which is a big win, no new taxes, and so, we’ll see where we wind up on this.”

<http://www.politicker.com/2012/02/02/mayor-bloomberg-touts-balanced-budget-while-warning-of-ticking-time-bomb-in-pension-fund/>



Bloomberg Says He'll Close Budget Gap Without Taxes, Teacher Layoffs

By WNYC Newsroom

Feb. 2, 2012

Mayor Michael Bloomberg unveiled his \$68.7 billion budget proposal on Thursday — calling the pension system a "ticking time bomb" but saying there would be no tax increases and no layoffs of teachers or uniformed workers.

Bloomberg said his budget plan closes the \$2 billion budget gap, but warned that the estimates put the budget deficit at \$3 billion in fiscal year 2014.

Bloomberg's plan calls for the elimination of 20 fire companies — as it did last year before the Council restored their funding — and cuts to the arts.

Council Finance Chairman Domenic Recchia said this year those targeted companies will be just one of several categories of budget cuts the Council has to weigh restoring.

"The libraries we put in \$60 million last year — this year we are facing \$75 million with the libraries, \$41 million in the culturals," he said.

The City Council will also take a closer look at the mayor's proposed cuts to pre-school, day care, after school programs and social services.

The mayor said one of the biggest hurdles to balancing the budget is ballooning pension system. For the first time this year, he said, the total cost of pension and fringe benefits for uniformed services will cost more than the salaries for that workforce.

Bloomberg's initial budget proposal is traditionally the opening salvo in a lengthy series of negotiations between policymakers, elected officials and advocates. The final budget must have the approval of the City Council.

Education

The mayor said he is sparing teachers again and does not foresee any layoffs next fiscal year. He pointed out that the city is reducing spending in all areas except education. The city is also seeing an increase in

state education funding for the next fiscal year.

“I am less stressed already,” said Schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott. But he added that there will still be budget challenges.

The city does not plan to restore any teaching positions lost through attrition, nor will it restore positions cut to school aides last year. Walcott said the Department of Education will also be looking internally to reduce costs, such as with transportation.

Last year, the mayor's initial budget plan called for cutting thousands of city teachers. The layoffs would have been the city's first public school pink slips since the economic crisis of the 1970s. But the final budget reduced the teaching force only through attrition.

City's Economic Health

The city will reap a major one-time windfall through the sale of 2,000 yellow taxi medallions, which are expected to fetch \$1 billion.

The mayor said the national economic recovery is lifting city revenues. Tourism remains a bright spot in the city's economy, and the real estate market is gradually improving (26 large office buildings valued at \$100 million or more were sold in 2011, marking a return to the normal range). But the European debt crisis and declining profits at major U.S. banks will likely result in layoffs for some of the most highly paid New Yorkers in 2012. Overall, wages in the city will rise only slightly, the mayor predicts.

About one in four dollars spent by the city comes from property taxes. For the coming fiscal year, the mayor expects property tax revenues to rise 5.6 percent, to \$17.8 billion.

Economically sensitive taxes such as personal income tax and sales tax are an even greater source of revenue, accounting for one dollar in three that the city collects. In fiscal 2012, the Mayor anticipates these taxes to bring in \$24.3 billion, an increase of 3.7 percent.

Through the year 2016, property tax revenues are expected to increase more than 3 percent year-to-year. The increase in economically sensitive tax collections is by definition harder to predict, but Bloomberg puts in in the 2.4 to 4.9 percent range (YTY) through 2016.

Even as the economy recovers, Bloomberg is predicting state and federal aid to the city to remain more or less frozen, at around \$20 billion each year through 2016.

Social Services

The mayor did not give specifics about cuts to child care in his budget address, but advocates complain his proposal would cut thousands slots for city-subsidized daycare, Head Start and pre-kindergarten. In addition, thousands of slots for after-school programs are slated to end.

The city is currently restructuring its early childhood learning programs in an effort to improve their quality. But advocates argue, it's also vastly reducing the number of families the programs will serve. “Promoting school reform efforts while disinvesting in early childhood education is not credible,” wrote Public Advocate Bill De Blasio in a letter to the mayor.

Health Care

As with other areas, the city under the proposed budget would continue to decrease spending on health-related services. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene — which operates a small number of clinics, but is largely focused on fighting chronic and communicable diseases, inspecting restaurants and administering everything from death certificates to pet licenses — would see its budget decline from \$617 million to \$582 million, a 6 percent drop.

The Health and Hospitals Corporation, the nation's largest public hospital system, is largely paid for by the state and federal governments through the Medicaid system. The mayor is proposing cutting the city's subsidy to HHC by 9 percent, from \$75 million to \$68 million.

<http://www.wnyc.org/blogs/wnyc-news-blog/>



Staten Island Advance

Bloomberg's \$68.7B budget seems geared to please, but Staten Island Council trio wary

By Judy L. Randall

Feb. 03, 2012

Staten Island City Council members gave cheers and jeers to Mayor Michael Bloomberg's preliminary \$68.7 billion budget plan for Fiscal 2013 yesterday, with no increase in taxes and no layoffs of teachers or uniformed workers, while maintaining long-term investments and reducing the city payroll by a modest 20,000 workers, mainly through attrition.

Yet it leaves open possible cuts to firehouses, libraries, cultural institutions and after-school programs, "exposing them to the proverbial budget dance once again," said Councilwoman Debi Rose.

"The Council needs to stand strong to once again protect [them]," added Councilman Vincent Ignizio, " ... while at the same time keeping taxes from going up. I will fight against the mayor's proposed cuts to the Beacon program at Tottenville High School and after-school programs throughout the city."

Still, Ignizio and Councilman James Oddo said they anticipate a less contentious budget process than in previous years, with Oddo saying his "gut" tells him firehouses here will not be on the chopping block.

But the Uniformed Firefighters Association isn't about to leave anything to chance, with UFA president Stephen Cassidy saying, "On the heels of the 10 busiest years in the history of the FDNY, both the mayor and City Council have to know that closing firehouses will compromise the public and firefighter safety. We strongly recommend they don't do it."

Said Oddo (R-Mid-Island/Brooklyn): "Relative to budgets in previous years, I believe this will be an easier one with less rancor."

Added Ignizio (R-South Shore): "This is shaping up to be a much less contentious budget than we anticipated. But this is just the beginning of a long budget process."

The Council will hold budget hearings in the coming weeks, with Bloomberg submitting a revamped budget plan in May for a Council vote in advance of July 1, when Fiscal 2013 kicks in.

During his preliminary budget unveiling in City Hall, Bloomberg called it a "responsible budget that continues to make responsible spending cuts while protecting the core services and investments that have helped our city to weather the national recession better than most other places."

But Oddo termed a "huge red flag" the city's increased revenue projections from property taxes -- from \$17.8 billion next year to \$20.3 billion in Fiscal Year 2016 -- the result of increased assessments.

"Next year's [property tax] bill might be ugly," Oddo posted on his City Council Facebook page, noting the Council has no say in the matter and calling the "property tax formula in NYC and NYS a convoluted mess."

Oddo also thumped the Bloomberg administration's inability to get fringe benefit give-backs and health care benefit reductions during municipal contract negotiations early in the mayor's time in office, along with reductions in Medicaid and debt service, saying the "long-term" negative impact will be felt far into the future.

Meanwhile, Oddo and Borough President James Molinaro sought to highlight the importance of pension reform for future city workers, saying the current benefits packages are "unsustainable" in the long term -- an echo of Gov. Andrew Cuomo's Tier 6 pension plan, also spotlighted by the mayor.

"The City of New York has gone from about \$1 billion in pension costs in 2002 to an estimated \$8 billion this upcoming year," Molinaro said. "We can't support this rate of growth. ... No reasonable person can look at the current numbers and not see that there is a big problem here."

Said Ms. Rose (D-North Shore): "While the mayor's budget touts the results of several years of prudence and no new tax increases, which will be greeted by a collective sigh of relief from New York City residents, we must not be lulled into a false sense of relief. ... It is of great concern to me that the city is reliant upon fees and fines to generate revenue to fill budgetary gaps, as demonstrated by the recent proliferation of fines levied against restaurant and bar owners. The excessive meting out of fines and fees amounts to unfair taxation and negates the mayor's pronouncement of no tax increases."

http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2012/02/bloombergs_687b_budget_seems_g.html

Mayoral wannabes strut stuff at 'budget dance'

By Jeremy Smerd

Feb. 3, 2012

The \$68.7 billion budget Mayor Mike Bloomberg presented yesterday offered little fodder for potential successors to further their own ambitions. But that didn't stop them from trying.

All but one contender found a perch that appeared to play into their 2013 strategies.

"It was almost like each of the candidates got together in a room beforehand to pick their own issue to hit home," said political consultant Joe Mercurio. "Combined, they're the perfect Democratic candidate to go after Bloomberg."

The budget plan closes a \$2 billion gap by exhausting reserve funds but without raising taxes. City Council Speaker Chris Quinn, who is trying to woo business owners, took the mayor to task for increasing revenue projected to come from fines and fees. The increase amounts to about \$45 million. While a City Council insider said the speaker doesn't object to all of the changes, she knows they exasperate entrepreneurs.

"We shouldn't be harassing business and property owners with frivolous violations to bring in more revenue," Quinn said in a statement.

Public Advocate Bill de Blasio spoke of working families when he criticized cuts to child care and afterschool slots. "We cannot force more families to choose between their jobs and their children," he said.

Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer referred indirectly to his plan to cut taxes for middle-income earners and raise them for the rich by saying of the "budget dance": "Let's change the tune and have an honest conversation about available resources and policy priorities."

Uncharacteristically, Comptroller John Liu, whose candidacy remains shadowed by an investigation into his fundraising, ignored the "unsustainable" pension costs highlighted by the mayor, perhaps because reform is now also a priority of Gov. Andrew Cuomo. Liu has said poor stock market returns, not lavish benefits for retirees, have pushed up costs.

Yesterday, however, Liu criticized the budget for using "short-term financial maneuvers"—one-shot revenue raisers like taxi medallion sales and retiree health care trust fund withdrawals.

Bill Thompson, the only declared candidate, remained characteristically silent. As of press time he had not issued a statement.

<http://www.crainsnewyork.com/article/20120203/INS/120209967#ixzz1lKgJPlI3>

Queen Beacon centers at risk of closure

By Clare Trapasso

Feb. 7, 2012

More than half-a-dozen city centers that offer free after-school, GED and immigration services are on the chopping block — and half of the ones most at risk are in Queens.

The city plans to cut funding for seven Beacon programs by July 1 and that's causing panic among parents and advocates.

No announcements have been made on which of the 80 city centers, based in public schools, are to be shuttered.

"It's going to be a huge loss," said Gigi Li, co-director of the Neighborhood Family Services Coalition, which opposes the cuts.

"Families are really going to have to think about how they're going to be able to maintain an income while their kids are in a safe space," she said, referring to the free after-school and summer camp programs.

Jocinta Gordon, director of the Beacon at Intermediate School 109, in Queens Village, said her center has a "positive effect" on the more than 1,000 children and adults it serves annually.

The center, which advocates have determined is one of the 16 most vulnerable to be cut, offers various programs for students as well as English language classes and immigration assistance. It is run by Goodwill Industries.

"These kids would be on the street without any after-school services," Gordon said. And "this jeopardizes summer camp."

Department of Youth and Community Development spokeswoman Cathleen Collins said the plan is expected to save more than \$2 million next year.

"Unfortunately, our economic reality has required painful funding decisions for programs like the Beacon Community Centers," she said in a statement.

The agency is looking at population and poverty data to determine which centers to close. The move is expected to affect roughly 18,000 young people and adults.

Patrick Pinchinat, who runs the Beacon at Junior High School 190, in Forest Hills, said he has been reaching out to elected and city officials and circulating petitions to keep the Beacons open.

“I’m going to fight to the end,” said Gordon, whose Queens Community House center serves more than 1,500 people a year. “We want to avoid latch-key kids and kids having idle time to get involved in negative activities.”

“These are the types of programs that are needed,” he said. “Instead of talking about cuts, we should be trying to find ways to pour more resources into these programs.”

http://articles.nydailynews.com/2012-02-07/news/31035688_1_summer-camp-programs-centers-beacon-programs



Beacon rally draws crowd to Parsons

By Liz Rhoades

Feb. 23, 2012

Fearing the city will eliminate the Parsons Beacon program in Flushing, youngsters, their parents and elected officials came out on a rainy Thursday night to protest the potential closing.

Organized by Councilman Jim Gennaro (D-Fresh Meadows), the rally was held early enough so that kids from the after-school program could participate before going home. Several parents and community leaders also joined in.

Due to budget constraints, the mayor's FY 2013 budget calls for eliminating an estimated seven Beacons in the city. Queens has 20 such programs, and elected officials indicated that eight of them could be among those chosen for closure, including the Parsons one.

Each Beacon program costs about \$330,000 a year, and the city estimates it could save \$2.46 million if seven of them are shut down.

Assemblyman Rory Lancman (D-Fresh Meadows), who participated in Thursday's event, noted that the Parsons Beacon serves more than 1,000 people a year.

Lancman wrote in a letter to the Department of Youth and Community Development commissioner that the Beacon helps students in the fourth through eighth grades get homework help and recreation time. High school students volunteer and develop leadership skills through internships. Lancman urged the commissioner to protect the program.

The Parsons Beacon is located at R.F. Kennedy Community Middle School and the Queens School of Inquiry, both located at 158-40 76 Road. Participating youngsters held up homemade signs asking the city to keep the program open. Gabby, a sixth grader, called the program fun. "I get homework help and people take care of me," she said.

Sylvia Wilson, whose son, Collin, 11, has been attending the program since September, says he looks forward to it. "He takes part in basketball, football, does his homework and gets help if he needs it," Wilson said.

She added that Collin stays until 6:30 p.m. almost every schoolday. "He loves everything about the Beacon," she said. "It means a lot to the kids."

Gennaro called the rally, “the first salvo,” saying, “We have to tell the good story of the Beacons and they will be saved.” “There is an effort to cut back, but we are pushing back.”

Lancman, who got involved with youth issues when he served on Community Board 8, called the program “a terrific organization that is well run.”

State Sen. Toby Stavisky (D-Flushing) noted that the program is like a “beacon of light that attracts older and younger people.” Although as a state legislator, she has no direct control over city spending, Stavisky said “we speak out on issues all the time. The Beacons provide resources that are essential to working-class people.”

Assemblyman Michael Simanowitz (D-Flushing) said that even though these are hard economic times, there is fat in the city budget that can be eliminated, although he did not elaborate. “The Beacon programs are not fat,” Simanowitz said. “They are essential. We have to stop the mayor from using kids and seniors as bargaining chips.”

A total of 16 Beacon programs were to be eliminated this year, but money was found to extend them to the end of this fiscal year.

Marva Dudley, chairwoman of the Parsons Beacon Advisory Board, asked where the youngsters would go if the program was eliminated, especially for those whose parents work and count on the program for watching their children. “I hope our voices are heard,” Dudley added.

Ken Cohen, president of the Flushing Suburban Civic Association, said that if the Beacon is closed, “it would be an atrocity.”

Officials at the rally said that the city has refused to release the names of the Beacons on the chopping block, which makes it difficult to organize protests. But Gennaro said: “No one wants to lose a Beacon.”

http://www.qchron.com/editions/north/beacon-rally-draws-crowd-to-parsons/article_4cd38161-97be-5241-90b7-72eb88c976b3.html

The New York Times

Budget Cuts May Threaten City Programs for Children

By Kate Taylor

March 5, 2012

It has become an annual New York drama: cutbacks in the mayor's proposed budget loom, with threats of firehouses being shut down, arts programs slashed and senior centers closed, only to be followed by restorations in the City Council. Yet the drama does not have a happy ending for everyone, and some of the cutbacks are eventually enacted.

This year, many families are concerned that cuts to child care and after-school programs could result in 47,000 children losing access to those services, advocates for the programs said on Sunday.

Previous rounds of budget reductions have already eroded these programs, the advocates said. The number of children from low-income working families who attend city-subsidized child care has dropped by more than 9,000 since 2009, from 51,712 to 42,215. And the number of children attending after-school programs under the [Department of Youth and Community Development's Out-of-School Time program](#) has declined even more sharply, from 85,513 in 2009 to 52,000 in 2012 — a drop of almost 40 percent.

Stephanie Gendell, the associate executive director for policy and public affairs for the [Citizens' Committee for Children of New York](#), said it was puzzling that Mayor [Michael R. Bloomberg](#) was cutting funds for child care and after-school programs when he had staked so much of his legacy on education and had described those very programs as critical to children's academic success.

"It doesn't match anything he's said about the importance of education, the importance of closing the achievement gap, the importance of his Young Men's Initiative, which is focused on closing the achievement gap and making kids college-ready," Ms. Gendell said. "Now he's cutting the same programs that do just that."

A spokeswoman for Mr. Bloomberg insisted that the administration was trying to improve child care in harsh fiscal times. Indeed, the city is in the process of putting into effect a new model for early childhood education, called Early Learn NYC, which is intended to improve the quality of subsidized child care. Yet because of diminished financing, and because the new model would provide more money per child, there will be openings for 8,200 fewer children next year. Centers that have contracts with the city have had to reapply, and many worry that they will be dropped. They then would have to get by on private donations, charge more, or close.

One of the programs in this limbo is the Cypress Hills Child Care Center in Brooklyn, where Ruth Fernandez, a 42-year-old single mother of four children, sends her 4-year-old daughter, Amira, for \$142 a week.

Ms. Fernandez said that in the year that she had attended the program, Amira had become much more sociable and had learned basic skills: “She knows how to write her name and last name, she knows how to count to 20, and she knows the colors.”

Ms. Fernandez said her older daughter, now 16, did not go to a similar program and struggled in kindergarten — something she hopes that Amira can avoid. If the Cypress Hills center has to close, Ms. Fernandez, who is a driving instructor, said she could take Amira to less formal day care in someone’s home. But she worried that it would not be monitored by the city and would not benefit her daughter educationally.

“They’re probably just watching TV,” she said.

The roughly 420 after-school programs currently under the umbrella of the Out-of-School Time program also face the budget ax. Due to the net loss of \$18 million — the combination of cuts in next year’s budget and money that the City Council restored this year — the city will award new contracts to only 220 programs.

Jacqueline Bailey, 50, a single mother who lives in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, is worried about what will happen if the after-school program that her daughter attends at a public elementary school in Park Slope has to close.

She said her daughter, Heaven, who is 9, would have to take the subway home by herself — a 45-minute ride, with a transfer.

“She would have to become a latchkey kid, and I don’t think nowadays being a latchkey kid is safe,” said Ms. Bailey, who does technology work through a temporary agency. “I wouldn’t be able to focus or concentrate on my job.”

The spokeswoman for the mayor, Samantha Levine, said in an e-mail: “Economic realities have required painful funding decisions, but we are working within our means to provide critical services. For example, Early Learn NYC enables us to realize our vision of preparing children for school success by providing quality classroom experiences and critical family supports, while investing our limited resources in expanding or sustaining capacity in neighborhoods where the largest number of eligible children reside.”

<http://nyti.ms/ziNFu1>

Protesters Urge Mayor to Spare Programs for Children

By Theodoric Meyer

March 5, 2012

Bill de Blasio, the city's public advocate and a likely mayoral candidate in the 2013 election, joined half a dozen City Council members, parents and other advocates on the steps of City Hall on Monday afternoon to criticize proposed cuts to the city's child care and after-school programs.

The cutbacks, which are reflected in Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's budget plan for the next fiscal year, could affect 47,000 children, protesters said on Monday. They would hurt working parents like Nancy Maxwell.

Ms. Maxwell, 38, who works as a toll collector on Interstate 95 and lives in the Bronx, sends her two children to Public School 142 Amalia Castro on the Lower East Side. She depends on its after-school program to look after her children, she said at the news conference on Monday.

"I can't be there when that bell rings at 2:45," Ms. Maxwell said in an interview afterward. "Without these after-school programs, I'm going to have to quit my job."

The city's child care and after-school programs served 137,225 children in 2009, according to the Campaign for Children, the group behind Monday's event. But several years of budget cuts have reduced that number to 94,215, and the latest proposal could reduce it to 53,315.

Councilman Jumaane D. Williams of Brooklyn condemned the budget plan, saying he was watching his language because children were present.

The children — three dozen 4- and 5-year-olds in puffy coats from the Chung Pak Day Care Center a few blocks away in Chinatown — waved signs in front of Mr. Williams and the other speakers.

The Campaign for Children is a new partnership between the NYC Youth Alliance, an advocacy group for after-school programs, and the Emergency Coalition to Save Child Care, and its structure may help to save both programs, said Wayne Ho, the executive director of the Coalition for Asian-American Children and Families, which works with the Campaign for Children.

In the past, Mr. Ho said, "there were times when they would play child care off against after-school, and after-school off against child care." This time, he said, will be different.

Samantha Levine, a spokeswoman for Mr. Bloomberg, declined to comment on Monday. But on Sunday she said that the administration was “working within our means to provide critical services.”

Many of the speakers on the City Hall steps on Monday seemed frustrated not only with the cuts, but also with Mr. Bloomberg himself. Though Mr. de Blasio’s remarks were measured, Mr. Williams suggested that it was time for new leadership at City Hall.

“I can taste January 2014,” he said. “It’s going to be a great time for this city.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/schoolbook/2012/03/05/protesters-urge-mayor-to-spare-programs-for-children/>



Advocates Criticize Mayor's Cuts to After-School, Child Care

By Sam Levin

March 5, 2012

It's the budget dance!

It's that wonderful time of the year when advocacy groups take turns on the steps of City Hall protesting the budget cuts in their areas of interest. Last week, we reported on some advocates angry with the city's proposed cuts to HIV/AIDS services in the mayor's budget unveiled last month. Those guys went all out. Today, we've got for you another campaign of upset folks -- this time targeting potential losses to the city's after-school and child care programs.

Advocates from this newly-formed coalition called Campaign for Children say that this is more than just the typical dance, arguing that this time the proposed cuts threaten to significantly hurt early childhood education in the city.

The group released a report today that says that between 2009 and today, more than 43,000 New York City children have already lost access to affordable child care and after-school programs. They argue that if the mayor doesn't restore funding, an additional 47,000 children and families will be shut out of these programs.

"The city has to take a real look at what is expected out of this new proposal and can it be achieved and what will that mean when it cannot be possible?" City Councilwoman Diana Reyna told Runnin' Scared this afternoon after an unrelated event. "Right now, we are looking at what are multiple layers of issues regarding an attack on the child care system."

Advocates said that, at its height in 2009, the city's Out-of-School Time, or OST, program -- which provides free academic and recreational activities for K-12 students -- served 85,000 children, but now only serves 52,000 youth. Proposed cuts, the report says, could reduce current capacity by half, meaning hundreds of currently-operating elementary and middle school programs could have to close their doors.

Those protesting the budget are also targeting the potential loss of \$52.9 million worth of child care services starting in July. They say that the city's transition to a program called Early Learn NYC has good intentions of improving child care quality, but lacks the necessary funding to be successful and reach all the students who need it. The advocates argue that 15,900 fewer children will have access to child care by the

end of 2012, in part because the budget proposal does not stabilize funding that was restored last year.

(Officials from the city noted that that figure includes 8,200 that the city is proposing to cut, plus 7,700 slots which were only made possible from a one-time funding plan for fiscal year 2012 from the mayor).

The mayor has repeatedly said that early childhood education and after-school programs are vital, in January calling on the state to increase funding for OST.

But Stephanie Gendell, associate executive director for the Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, told Runnin' Scared that it seems hypocritical that the mayor is threatening cuts to vital programs at this time.

"It's very frustrating, because on one hand, the mayor supports these types of programs...and he has committed himself to improving the education system for kids. He says he's committed to closing the achievement gap," she said by phone after a City Hall rally. "Yet these are the programs that would really enable children to succeed."

While she said the "budget dance" does happen every year, it feels particularly threatening this time around. "This year the enormity of the cuts...is just so severe that we formed this campaign...to try to make sure everyone's aware how detrimental this could be."

Councilwoman Reyna told us that the city has not done a good job considering the larger impacts of cuts to child care and after-school, noting that if more children don't have safe places to learn and spend time out of school -- and if more parents are unable to go to work because they no longer have access to child care -- then, "the indirect costs to the city are going to be astronomical. And that is not factored in."

Samantha Levine, spokeswoman for the mayor, said in a statement to Runnin' Scared, "Economic realities have required difficult funding decisions, but we are working within our means to provide critical services. For example, Early Learn NYC enables us to realize our vision of preparing children for school success by providing quality classroom experiences and critical family supports while investing our limited resources in expanding or sustaining capacity in neighborhoods where the largest number of eligible children reside."

Runnin' Scared also reached out to the city's Youth and Community Development department, which oversees OST, and we'll update if we hear back.

http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninscared/2012/03/advocates_criti.php



Day Care Faces Cuts in New NYC Budget

March 5, 2012

When New York City lawmakers approve the next budget, it could send families with young children scrambling. NBC New York Government Affairs Reporter Melissa Russo has more on the story.

<http://www.nbcnewyork.com/video/#!/on-air/as-seen-on/Day-Care-Faces-Cuts-in-New-NYC-Budget/141504773>



The Call Blog: Coalition Fights Proposed Cuts to Child Care, After School Programs

By NY1 News

March 5, 2012

Host: Heidi from Inwood called the show tonight to say cost-saving measures should begin long before after-school programs do. She wanted women to be more mindful of their bodies, more aware of the responsibilities of becoming a mother, more selective of the men they date. Heidi thinks more money should be spent on child prevention, than child care. I wonder how many single mothers agree.

Staff: Parents, education advocates and elected officials rallied on the steps of City Hall today against proposed cuts to child care and after-school programs. The newly formed "Campaign for Children" is hoping the City Council rejects Mayor Bloomberg's preliminary budget proposal that would eliminate 15,900 child care slots and slash after-school programs for 31,600 children.

Mayor Bloomberg has said his proposed budget invests in children, pointing out his calls for increased education aid and no teacher layoffs. He said: "We just have to reach into our pockets and make sure our kids have the future we want for them." But at today's rally, his critics wanted more. What do you say?

Should the City Council fight to restore child care and after-school programs for more than 47,000 children? If you rely on these services, how would you or your child be affected if they were gone? Is Mayor Bloomberg's preliminary budget good for the Department of Education overall?

http://www.ny1.com/content/the_call/the_call_blog/157089/the-call-blog--coalition-fights-proposed-cuts-to-child-care--after-school-programs

City Time-keepers: Council eyes spending \$466M refund

By David Seifman

March 19, 2012

There was one thing wrong with the \$500 million settlement in the CityTime scandal: the timing. SAIC, the company chiefly responsible for building the corruption-infused timekeeping system, agreed to the extraordinary payment last week to avoid criminal prosecution by US Attorney Preet Bharara. As luck would have it, the announcement came just as Mayor Bloomberg is gearing up for budget negotiations with the City Council.

All of a sudden, council members clamoring for restorations to child care, libraries and other programs cut by the mayor as part of the ridiculous budget maneuvers that take place every year see dollar signs before their eyes.

The council's Women's Caucus is demanding that the administration "take this opportunity to make a sound investment in our city's children and working families."

"This unexpected money makes it possible for the mayor to restore child care and after-school programs to 47,000 children," proclaimed the Campaign for Children advocacy group.

Councilwoman Tish James (D-Brooklyn) proposed allocating part of the CityTime windfall to \$113 million in unfunded kids' programs.

The extra cash is bound to put added pressure on the mayor to spend more now.

"People think when there's more money, it's easier to do the budget," said one insider. "I think it makes it harder."

The way the budget game gets played is that the mayor threatens to cut services worth in the vicinity of \$300 million to \$400 million that he knows the council will put back.

The money is hidden away in budgetary caves, and miraculously appears to save the day in late May or early June, when both sides usually come together.

But now there's an extra \$466 million to contend with, the refund coming to the city from the \$500 million SAIC sent to the US Attorney's Office.

Bloomberg insists that the city's share of the payout is all spoken for.

"This money was spent a long time ago," he said, moments after Bharara announced the settlement. On his radio show Friday, he went so far as to allocate it.

"We have a \$3 billion deficit projected for the [fiscal] year 2014," the mayor said. "Now we have a \$2.5 billion deficit unless our tax revenues don't come up to what we're thinking, in which case it may be even bigger."

Domenic Recchia (D-Brooklyn), the council's finance chairman, said he's sympathetic to the spend-it-now views, but said, "We have to plan for the future, and next year's budget is going to be tough." Looks like CityTime is about to create another controversy.

http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/citytime_keepers_96W9Weu8V4BPLUpbnOy7hM#ixzz1rHEh8nLp



Parents Decry Cuts To Beacon After-School Programs

By Ruschell Boone

March 23, 2012

Seven of the popular Beacon after-school programs may be shut down due to city budget cuts, affecting 6,000 students in all five boroughs – and parents in the affected communities are not happy.

The Beacon program provides educational and extra-curricular activities for thousands of New Yorkers.

"Some parents cannot afford babysitting and it's just very helpful," parent Lydia Mestica said Friday. "So if they do cut down the Beacon program it will be very upsetting."

"They will have no place to go after school," said Wanda Wooten of the Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center of the children who would be displaced.

The proposed closure is in response to Mayor Michael Bloomberg's \$2.1 million budget cuts to the Department of Youth and Community Development.

There are currently 80 Beacon programs across the city. Of the seven slated to close, there are two each in Queens and Manhattan, and one each in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Staten Island.

The Beacon program was instituted in 1991, but the city has been cutting funding due to a lack of state and federal dollars. "Our program not only serves our immediate area of Forest Hills and Rego Park, but we serve youth, families and adults throughout the borough," said Marlena Starace of Queens Community House.

The seven programs are scheduled to close on July 1. That means City Council members have until then to negotiate with the mayor in an attempt to restore the cuts and save the seven programs.

http://brooklyn.ny1.com/content/top_stories/158204/parents-decry-cuts-to-beacon-after-school-programs

Seven Beacons to Close in July

By NYNP

March 26, 2012

The New York City Department of Youth and Community Development has announced that seven Beacon programs which serve more than 6,000 New Yorkers will close in July. The Beacon programs that will close are:

- Phipps Community Development at IS 192 in the Bronx;
- HeartShare Human Services at IS 259 in Brooklyn;
- Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center at PS 198 in Manhattan;
- Hudson Guild at MS 414 in Manhattan;
- Queens Community House at JHS 190 in Queens;
- Samuel Field Y at MS 158 in Queens;
- Tottenville High School Jewish Community Center of Staten Island in Staten Island
-

Following the announcement, advocates, parents, and staff called on the Mayor to restore funding to these nationally celebrated youth programs, and fully fund child care and after-school programs in his Executive Budget.

"With today's announcement that seven Beacon programs will close by July, we are already seeing the devastating effects of the Bloomberg administration's cuts to child care and after-school programs," said the Campaign for Children spokesperson Emma Woods. "These closures mean that thousands of young people will be left without the educational, enriching after-school environments that help them succeed in school, and thousands of parents will be forced to scramble to find safe places for their children while they're at work."

Instituted in 1991, NYC's 80 Beacon programs serve communities' needs utilizing a neighborhood-based approach. Beacons operate after school, on weekends, school holidays, and throughout the summer, serving mainly middle school youth. The Beacon model is recognized nationally as a premier program for positive youth development and has been replicated in over 10 cities around the country. Beacon programs work to prevent drop-outs in high school by focusing on academic enhancement, life skills, career awareness/school-to-work transition, civic engagement/community building, recreation/health and fitness and culture/art. Each Beacon Program serves over 800 children, youth and adults.

"When our Beacon program closes, 1,200 children and adults will no longer have access to the academic enrichment, career readiness, and community building services they rely on," said Wanda Wooten of Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center. "In the East Harlem and Yorkville communities we serve, 70% of students qualify for free school lunch and families cannot afford to pay for the type of programs Beacon offers – programs that help young people succeed in school, and that allow parents to keep their jobs while their children have a safe and enriching place to go. Cutting funding for these essential programs is a misguided policy that will have a devastating long-term impact on our communities and the city."

"This is just the tip of the iceberg," said Woods. "With the Mayor's proposed cuts to child care and after-school programs, more than 47,000 children and families face this same crisis this year. Mayor Bloomberg must restore funding for child care and after-school programs that children and working families depend on."

<http://www.nynp.biz/index.php/breaking-news/9672-seven-beacons-to-close-in-july->



Seven Beacons set for closure

By Alexa Altman

March 27, 2012

Public protest proved to be in vain, as the Department of Youth and Community Development announced that seven Beacon city-wide programs will close their doors in July.

Founded in 1991, the 80 Beacon programs existing throughout New York City as a subset of Queens Community House are “youth-development centers” providing year-round, complementary services, specializing in young people ages six to 21 and focusing on leadership and skills growth.

Beacons operate after school, on weekends, school holidays, and throughout the summer, representing a program model that has been adopted in over 10 cities across the country. Each Beacon program serves roughly 800 youth and adults.

Queens Community House is a network of social service providers assisting residents with benefits such as tutoring and athletics, as well as classes for General Education Diploma (GED) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

The Beacons set to be shut down are Phipps Community Development at I.S. 192 in the Bronx; Heart Share Human Services at I.S. 259 in Brooklyn; Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center at P.S. 198 in Manhattan; Hudson Guild at M.S. 414 in Manhattan; Queens Community House at J.H.S. 190 in Queens; Samuel Field Y at M.S. 158 in Queens; and Tottenville High School Jewish Community Center of Staten Island in Staten Island.

When a list of 16 potentially closing settlement houses was compiled earlier in 2012, Patrick Pinchinat, Director of Queens Community House Beacon Program at J.H.S. 190, said the center is at-risk because it resides in “low-needs zone,” – an area with a relatively low poverty rate and average socio-economic standing.

Dr. Steven Goodman, Executive VP and Chief Executive Officer of the Samuel Field Y M.S. 158 Beacon Program, was surprised that this decision was made so early in the budgeting process.

In response to the surrounding area being deemed a “low-needs zone,” Goodman claimed that when the program was established in Little Neck in the early 1990s, it desperately needed its services.

“The bottom line is that we were successful in turning the community around and sustaining it,” said Goodman. “Youth crime has declined tremendously. Academic improvement has inclined. Parents faced with hard economic times have been able to go back to work without being concerned with child care. It has encouraged parents to seek employment and better paying jobs. Now two parents can work instead of one.”

According to a representative from the mayor’s office, the closures are attributable to “painful funding decisions.”

“We are committed to providing the quality programming on which so many rely, and will work within our means to continue to provide them,” said the representative.

The elimination of these programs is expected to save the city approximately \$2.1 million in the 2013 Fiscal Year.

According to Goodman, before the final budget is decided on, representatives from the closing Beacons will have a chance to express how much this will affect their communities.

“We will stand together and stand firm to get our message out,” said Goodman. “We hope that all seven Beacons can make something happen. Optimism isn’t enough. It’s going to take a lot of hard work.”

<http://queenscourier.com/2012/seven-beacons-set-for-closure/>



Forest Hills beacon could shut its doors by July 2012

By Lisa A. Fraser

March 28, 2012

The Russell Sage Junior High School 190 Beacon Program, which is on the chopping block and could close by July 2012, is gaining support from a children's advocacy group in hopes that the program's doors could remain open.

The Campaign for Children became involved last Friday, urging Mayor Michael Bloomberg to reconsider his plans to cut not just the J.H.S. 190-based beacon program, but another at M.S. 158 in Queens, and five others across the city.

"We are already seeing the devastating effects of the Bloomberg administration's cuts to child care and after-school programs," said Campaign for Children spokesperson Emma Woods. "These closures mean that thousands of young people will be left without the educational, enriching after-school environments that help them succeed in school, and thousands of parents will be forced to scramble to find safe places for their children while they're at work."

The mayor is proposing the cuts for the Fiscal Year 2013 budget and the Campaign for Children says that his plans would slash after-school program capacity for 31,800 children

"This is just the tip of the iceberg," Woods said. "With the mayor's proposed cuts to child care and after-school programs, more than 47,000 children and families face this same crisis this year."

This is the fifth straight year that the mayor has cut child care and after-school programs. And the Campaign for Children says that his latest proposal will result in 90,000 fewer children having access to these programs than in 2009 – a 61 percent decrease.

The J.H.S. 190 program has been a target for budget cuts for months, after an announcement last year that its funding was more than the city could afford.

Local politicians Councilwoman Karen Koslowitz and Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, as well as Community Board 6, all expressed their support for the program. Hevesi sent a letter to the mayor in February urging him to reconsider closing the program given its success within the community.

A spokesperson from the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) said the decision to cut the seven programs was to help meet a \$2.1 million financial gap.

"This is not a decision taken lightly, and we appreciate how valuable our 80 Beacon programs are to families across the city," said spokesperson Cathleen Collins. "To ensure that communities are not disproportionately impacted, DYCD used objective measures, including population and poverty data and program distribution, to determine which sites to close."

The Beacon program at Russell Sage Junior High is targeted for closure because the 11375 zip code is more affluent than other areas. Hevesi and others argued that the program's location doesn't prevent it from serving students and parents in desperate need.

"This program, while located in a low-needs zip code, is overwhelmingly serving minority youth, and the success of the leadership development curriculum attracts students from all areas in Queens," Hevesi said in his letter.

The program's popularity has allowed it to serve on average over 1,100 students each year, despite its contractual obligation with the city only requiring the enrollment of 950 students.

J.H.S. 190 Beacon Director Patrick Pinchinat said that his staff, as well as the students who benefit from the program, will not give up fighting to save it.

"It's disheartening, you never want to see your program on the list, but we will continue to advocate," he said. "We have proof and evidence to support what we do."

The Forest Hills beacon program has served the community since 1998 and Pinchinat is concerned about what will happen to the middle school and high school students if the program is indeed cut.

"We serve about 100 middle school kids every day after school and 50 high school kids every night at our teen center," he said. "If cut, they'd all be on the street or going home with no supervision. It would be a huge void."

Collins said that DYCD understands the impact the closures will have on the affected neighborhoods and will work closely with residents to identify other youth services available in the community.

The department is also encouraging young people and parents to access DYCD's Youth Connect at (800) 246-4646 or nyc.gov/dycd to find out about jobs, afterschool programs and training opportunities.

Despite the news, Pinchinat has hope that the program will be around for decades to come.

"We have a social responsibility to our youth to prepare them for the future," he said. "When you threaten to cut something that's accessible and beneficial to them, what type of message are you sending?"

http://www.foresthillstimes.com/view/full_story/18034270/article-Forest-Hills-beacon-could-shut-its-doors-by-july-2012-?instance=home_news_2nd_left#ixzz1qc5yfh9R



Budget Cuts In Social Services Spurs Two City Hall Protests

By NY1 News

March 29, 2012

Parents, advocates and lawmakers rallied at City Hall Thursday against the mayor's proposed \$124 million in social service cuts in the 2013 budget, which will affect the Administration for Children's Services, The Department of Homeless Services and the Human Resources Administration.

City Council members and those who use the social services were worried that if the cuts continue, the programs eventually will no longer exist.

"We talk a better New York, a brighter New York, well, this is New York," said Queens Councilwoman Julissa Ferreras. "And if our mayor cannot recognize that you cannot consistently attempt to cut our budget, and for us to stand here and say and not fight these cuts is unrealistic."

"The building I came out of before I came into supportive housing, we had pigeons take over half of the building, we had drugs in the building, we were literally prisoners in the building," said supportive housing resident Almidia Jack.

Protesters said if the mayor's proposed plan was enacted, it would amount to the fifth-consecutive year of cuts to child care and after school programs.

Later in the day, child care providers and their advocates also took to the steps of City Hall to protest the cuts.

They said the plan puts thousands of low-income families at risk of losing essential services that allow parents to hold full-time jobs while also feeding and educating their children.

"It's very hard for you to have child care, especially being a home health aide. I don't make \$200,000. It's very hard to work, pay rent and then pay child care," said a parent.

"For him to take it from those who need it, what it's going to do is set them further back and maybe even into the shelter," said another parent.

"It tells you a lot about the administration and what they really believe in because we should be helping families move forward and in order to do that, they need child care, affordable child care," said United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew.

A new analysis of New York City's economic outlook shows a projected \$1.4 billion surplus at the end of this fiscal year.

The Independent Budget Office reports spending on traditional public school classrooms will drop by \$200 million next year, but spending on charter schools will increase, and no teachers will face layoffs.

The IBO also reports the local economy is expected to add more jobs than previously anticipated, but a \$2.2 billion deficit is still projected for the city by 2014.

NY1 has reached out to the city for comment.

http://manhattan.ny1.com/content/top_stories/158506/budget-cuts-in-social-services-spurs-two-city-hall-protests



The Call Blog: IBO Predicts Budget Surplus; Rally Held To Restore Cuts

By NY1 News

March 29, 2012

John Schiumo (Host): For all the cuts proposed, for all the rates increased, it sure was startling to see the IBO project a \$1.4 billion surplus. Those fees and fines sure must add up...

The Call Staff: A new analysis of New York City's economic outlook shows a projected \$1.4 billion surplus at the end of this fiscal year. The Independent Budget Office reports spending on traditional public school classrooms will drop by \$200 million next year, but spending on charter schools will increase, and no teachers will face layoffs.

The IBO also reports the local economy is expected to add more jobs than previously anticipated, but a \$2.2 billion deficit is still projected for 2014.

As the Council considers Mayor Bloomberg's proposed budget, some New Yorkers are calling for lawmakers to restore cuts to subsidized child care and after-school programs. At a rally today on the steps of City Hall, parents called for funding to be continued for 47,000 slots currently on the chopping block. A budget deal is due by the end of June. What would you do?

Should the City Council fight to restore funding for subsidized child care and after-school programs? Do you want to see the City spend its surplus now on needed services, or streamline spending and plan for the long term? Should more money be spent on traditional schools or charter schools?

http://www.ny1.com/content/the_call/the_call_blog/158495/the-call-blog--ibo-predicts-budget-surplus--rally-held-to-restore-cuts

Michael Bloomberg's Budget Proposal Elicits Protest From Campaign For Children

By Saki Knafo

March 29, 2012

A coalition of more than 150 New York organizations, ranging from the Police Athletic League to the Children's Aid Society, have signed a letter urging Mayor Michael Bloomberg to restore \$170 million for children's services to his proposed budget.

The coalition, called the Campaign for Children, is asking the mayor to make sure that his budget includes funding for some 47,000 child care and after-school slots currently bound for the trash bin. The letter notes that funding for child care and after-school programs has declined each year since 2009. As a result, the city's subsidized child care and after-school systems serve 43,000 fewer children than they did five years ago.

If the proposed cuts stand, the letter warns, an additional 47,000 children will miss out on those programs. "This would mean that in five short years, more than 90,000 children will have been left without care," the letter continues.

The coalition plans to send the letter on Thursday. Gregory Bender, a policy analyst at United Neighborhood Houses NY and a spokesperson for the coalition, said, "This massive display of support is a message loud and clear from New York City to Mayor Bloomberg: 'You must restore funding for child care and after-school programs that children and working families depend on.'"

Samantha Levine, deputy press secretary for the mayor's office, pointed out that "economic realities have required difficult funding decisions." She also discussed the potential benefits of Early Learn NYC, an administration effort to raise the standards of publicly funded child care. Last year, the administration asked child care providers to submit proposals for programs specifically aimed at preparing children for school success. Those programs should roll out in the fall, and the administration argues that they'll provide better services than the old system. But they'll also cost more, which means that fewer children will have access to them.

Child care is a hot topic in education circles these days, largely thanks to the convergence of two phenomena that might at first seem unrelated: rising poverty and revolutionary brain science. In the last decade, as the ranks of American children living below the poverty line have swelled, researchers who study kids have turned up some troubling findings. They've learned that the emotional stress associated with poverty can inflict serious, lasting damage on the developing brain.

But they've also found that the right kind of child care can shield the brain against those effects. And while experts say that the first few years of a child's life are especially important in shaping the architecture of the brain and paving a child's path to success, research also attests to the importance of after-school programs for older children.

Since the cuts would primarily affect low-income parents, "they'll really have to make some tough choices," said Stephanie Gendell, the associate executive director of policy and public affairs for the Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, one of the organizations that has signed the letter. "Some parents may have to not continue working because they'll need a safe place for their child to be. Others may have to face the tenuous choice of finding some form of care that might not be as safe because it isn't regulated by the city."

The Maxwells are among those parents. Nancy Maxwell, a mother of two who spoke at a press conference for the coalition in early March, works as a tollbooth operator on the New York State Thruway. Her husband drives a train for the Metropolitan Transit Authority, and together they bring home \$60,000 a year, which is not enough to afford private child care, she said. So if her kids lose their after-school slots, she'll have to quit her job.

Of course, if that happens, she could apply for public assistance. As she sees it, the system is set up to encourage people like her to "stay home and live off the government."

The debate over child care and after-school funding isn't confined to New York. In North Carolina, home to what was long considered one of the best state-funded pre-kindergarten programs in the country, the Democratic governor is facing off against a Republican-dominated legislature in a bitter fight over funding for early-childhood programs.

Meanwhile, in the national arena, the Republican-led House of Representatives is getting ready to approve Rep. Paul Ryan's proposed 2013 budget, which would slash funding for Head Start, a federally funded early-childhood education program for low-income families.

New York City, like North Carolina, once garnered praise from children's advocates for its ambitious programs. In 2005, Bloomberg started the Out-of-School Time program, the largest after-school system in the country.

Last month, in a speech before the state legislature, Bloomberg said, "What happens after the final school bell of the day rings is as important to students as what goes on in the classrooms." Those who oppose his cuts would certainly agree.

Yet after peaking at \$120 million in 2009, funding for the program plunged to \$90 million, and the number of available slots dropped from 85,000 to 52,000. To quote a brief released by the campaign in early March, the possible loss of an additional 25,000 openings means that "New York City's children and working families face the dismantling of a once strong and vibrant system."

So how should the administration pay for the kids who'd lose their slots? "There should be a way," said Gendell, noting that the mayor managed to find an extra \$2 billion in the budget last year after the state slashed funds for city schools. "We are hoping something similar would happen here."

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/29/coalition-for-children-bloomberg-cuts_n_1388125.html?1333042385



Around Queens, cries to not close Beacons

By Anna Gustafson

March 29, 2012

The city's proposal to close two Beacon programs in Queens would be devastating for thousands of families from throughout the borough, including many working parents who rely on the free afterschool activities to keep their children busy while they are at their jobs, youth advocates and elected officials said this week.

"People are really upset about this," said Patrick Pinchinat, director of the Beacon program at JHS 190 in Forest Hills. "I had one of the worst days in my career when I had to announce the mayor's plan to my kids in the program. Kids were crying, and they're speaking out about it."

Mayor Bloomberg has called for about \$2.1 million to be cut from the Department of Youth and Community Development, which resulted in officials proposing to shutter seven of the 81 Beacon programs throughout the city, including the one at JHS 190 and another run by the Samuel Field Y at MS 158 in Bayside. Each Beacon program costs approximately \$334,000 to operate annually.

The JHS 190 site serves about 1,100 families, and MS 158 serves approximately 2,800 families annually, providing a variety of activities, including sports, mentoring, homework help, arts and crafts, dance and volunteer work.

The mayor's plan would have to be approved by the City Council, and a number of Queens legislators have slammed the proposal which, if implemented, would go into effect July 1. That, Steve Goodman, the executive vice president and CEO of the Samuel Fields Y, pointed out, would be when the Beacons' summer programs would normally be beginning.

"City Hall bureaucrats must think we're flush with services here in Bayside," Councilman Dan Halloran (R-Whitestone) said. "They are wrong. If they came out to see what is happening in our schools in northeast Queens, they would realize that we need Beacon programs. Instead of closing programs and hitting specific neighborhoods it deems privileged, the city should trim costs from each Beacon program to make them more efficient."

The Campaign for Children, a partnership of the Emergency Coalition to Save Child Care and the NYC Youth Alliance, pointed out that Beacon programs operate after school, on weekends and school holidays, and throughout the summer, and the free programs give children of working parents a safe haven.

“These closures mean that thousands of young people will be left without the educational, enriching afterschool environments that help them succeed in school, and thousands of parents will be forced to scramble to find safe places for their children while they’re at work,” said Emma Woods, a Campaign for Children spokeswoman.

Tania Calvo, the parent of an 11-year-old boy who attends the Forest Hills program, echoed Woods’ sentiment.

“I can’t afford to pay the fees of the afterschool and childcare programs in the area,” Calvo said. “The Beacon program offers me a safe and nurturing place where my son can learn, be kept off the streets and influenced by positive mentors.”

Like Halloran, Councilwoman Karen Koslowitz (D-Forest Hills) said she’s frustrated the city has targeted the JHS 190 site because it’s in a wealthier ZIP code.

“They have to get rid of the idea that Forest Hills is a place that doesn’t need help,” Koslowitz said. “I’m going to fight very hard to keep the Beacons open.”

Goodman noted that his program has been successful and draws students not only from the immediate Bayside area, but from throughout the borough.

“When that neighborhood was chosen to get a Beacon, it had some real needs the program was designed to address,” Goodman said. “We’ve successfully addressed many of those issues, including at-risk youth, youth that weren’t achieving their potential and a need for childcare and safe havens for kids.”

Without programs to help students at risk of dropping out or working with students to boost their attendance records at school, Goodman said he is “deeply concerned the the loss of this Beacon will destabilize this neighborhood and erode the important accomplishments that now characterize it.”

http://www.qchron.com/editions/queenswide/around-queens-cries-to-not-close-beacons/article_25febcd2083-5165-98a1-1e643af51df2.html

HOME REPORTER

Councilmember Vincent Gentile speaks to students at the McKinley Beacon Center

By Denise Romano

March 29, 2012

Community members are fighting to keep the Beacon Community Center at McKinley I.S. 259 alive, after the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) announced that it would be pulling the plug on eight centers throughout the city, including that one, as of July 1.

The center, which has been run by HeartShare Human Services for the past 15 years, services nearly 200 children per day between 3 and 10 p.m. on weekdays, including school holidays and vacations, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays. Not only do the students receive tutoring and homework help, they play sports, dance and do other constructive activities.

"We worry about the impact this will have on the children and families that use our program," said HeartShare President Bill Guarinello, stressing that the program was being closed for financial reasons. "We don't want the public will think HeartShare, and the other programs being closed, did something wrong or were not operating top-notch programs, which we are."

Joseph Impeduglia has been the center's director for the past 16 years. He said that kids come from as far as Staten Island to use the services. "By the end of the month, we will be at over 100 percent capacity," he said, adding that he has no paid staff -- the center is run by about 20 college and high school volunteers who are pursuing degrees in education.

"We all do whatever is necessary because we believe in what we are doing," Impeduglia explained.

The Beacon's summer camp is also in demand. About 220 to 230 kids attend each year and there is a waiting list of about 60 or 70. If this center closes, there will be no place for the displaced to go -- the nearest Beacon center that can accommodate students in junior high and high school is in Coney Island.

"It's like a family here," said assistant director Nadine Bohsali. How so? Impeduglia often shows up at his student's extra-curricular sports games and was even asked to be someone's confirmation sponsor. "I have a bunch of sons now," he said.

An emotional Impeduglia said that the center is crucial, especially to working parents. "Where am I supposed to tell these parents to take these kids?" he said, his eyes welling up. "I feel helpless."

Bay Ridgeite Arlene Martinez's son, Dylan, a sixth-grader at McKinley, attends the Beacon program. "If not for this, he would be home alone and would have to walk home alone," she said.

“We don’t know what we would do without it. We need it,” Martinez said, adding that Dylan looks forward to coming to school every day because of the center. “As a working parent, it’s so important. It gets kids out of the street and keeps them safe. I am devastated. It’s so important – I can’t stress it enough.”

Cathleen Collins, a spokesperson for DYCD, said that the closings are due to a “significant loss” of federal and state funding. “This is not a decision taken lightly,” she said.

Councilmember Vincent Gentile, who visited the Beacon Center on March 27, is launching a petition drive to keep the center open. “I am absolutely outraged that the city would even think of closing this center,” he said. “The neighborhoods I serve don’t qualify for many city services and I’m not going to stand for the city taking away funds for the few we do qualify for.”

Assemblymember Nicole Malliotakis also wrote a letter to the mayor. “The child care and after-school services provided by HeartShare Human Services at I.S. 259 are critical to families in Brooklyn, just as they are to families across the city that utilize other Beacon facilities,” stated Malliotakis.

http://www.homereporternews.com/news/school_news/i-s-save-our-beacon-center/article_b03dcafe-7932-11e1-8278-0019bb2963f4.html

Beloved afterschool Beacon programs slated to close this summer as part of draconian city budget cut

By Clare Trapasso, Mark Morales and Corinne Lestch

April 1, 2012

Once an answer to the Crown Heights, Brooklyn riots in 1991 to create safer streets and spaces, the Beacon afterschool program is now facing drastic cuts that will shutter seven sites across the city.

The New York City Department of Youth and Community Development has decided to discontinue programs that provide literacy activities, tutoring and high school and college prep to roughly 6,000 youth and also offer adult initiatives and focus groups.

“It’s a devastating choice to make,” said youth advocate Michelle Yanche of the nonprofit Campaign for Children. “These programs are not only essential for the young people - to give them a safe place and

Out of 80 Beacon programs, two in Queens, two in Manhattan, and one each in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Staten Island are slated to close in July.

“This difficult decision followed 12 rounds of gap-closing actions and a significant loss of federal and state funding incurred during the past several years,” said a DYCD spokeswoman in a statement. “This is not a decision taken lightly.”

But a slew of parents and youth advocates said those affected by the closings are poor, urban children and their families - the ones who most need the services.

“In the East Harlem and Yorkville communities we serve, 70% of students qualify for free school lunch,” said Wanda Wooten of Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center at Public School 198 in Manhattan. “Families cannot afford to pay for the type of programs Beacon offers.”

At Intermediate School 192 in the Bronx, dozens of kids can be seen after school hours snacking, socializing and solving homework problems as part of the Phipps Community Development Beacon program.

“If I’m slacking off on my homework, they actually care about us doing our work,” said Matthew Bustamante, 12, adding he was upset and surprised when he heard the program would come to a close.

“I don’t think I’d be able to stay as focused,” said the seventh-grader, clad in a blue sweatshirt and glasses.

Patrick Pinchinat, director of the Queens Community House at Junior High School 190, added, “There’s no other program like this in the area. It’s been tough the last couple days having to tell kids (that it will close).”

Dawn Vertuche said she relies on the program for her two sons since both she and her husband work long

hours.

“It’s had such a personal effect on my household,” said the Brooklyn resident, 37. “Having this program gives us a calm state of mind.”

Several city council members rallied last week to save a host of afterschool and childcare programs that are on the chopping block, putting 47,000 children citywide in jeopardy.

Dozens of staff positions at the Beacon centers would also be slashed, said devastated program director Monique De La Oz, who has been in her position for five months.

“We’ll fight tooth and nail to keep the program open,” she vowed.

http://articles.nydailynews.com/2012-04-01/news/31271491_1_dycd-beacon-centers-afterschool

151 Orgs Urge Bloomberg to Restore Child Care & After-School Funding

By NYNP

April 2, 2012

A total of 151 organizations claiming to represent more than 1 million New Yorkers have joined the Campaign for Children and signed a letter to Mayor Michael Bloomberg opposing proposed cuts to child care and after-school programs. The groups say that the Mayor's Executive Budget proposals for FY2012-13, which begins July 1st, will eliminate funding for 47,000 child care and after-school slots.

"Enacting these cuts will deal a devastating blow to struggling children and families," the letter states. "As a Mayor seeking to improve the education of our children, ensure college and career readiness for black and Latino youth, and stabilize the City's economy, we believe you should reassess proposed budget cuts in the realm of child care and after-school."

Click here to read the full letter and see the full list of signatories.

Advocates note that the Campaign for Children represents a newly-formed alliance between supporters of child care and after-school programs.

"The organizations that have joined the Campaign for Children know that we can't afford to cut the child care and after-school programs that allow hard-working parents to keep their [jobs](#) while their children get the educational opportunities they need to succeed," said Gregory Brender, Policy Analyst at United Neighborhood Houses NY, on behalf of Campaign for Children. "This massive display of support is a message loud and clear from New York City to Mayor Bloomberg – you must restore funding for child care and after-school programs that children and working families depend on."

In a recently-released impact brief, Campaign for Children found that, in each year since 2009, the Bloomberg administration has significantly reduced funding for the city's child care and after-school systems so that they serve fewer and fewer kids. They say that with the Mayor's newest cuts, services for more than 90,000 children will have been denied access in five short years – a 61% decrease.

<http://www.nynp.biz/index.php/breaking-news/9773-151-orgs-urge-bloomberg-to-restore-child-care-a-after-school-funding>

Hundreds Rally for Beacon School

By Mathew Hampton

April 4, 2012

Hundreds of students and parents rallied with local leaders at Russell Sage Junior High School on Tuesday afternoon, urging the mayor not to cut funds for what they call a crucial local program.

The Beacon School at the junior high has been a cornerstone of Out of School Time programs in the area for years. Hosted by the Queens Community House, it is the after-school home to dozens of children from across the borough.

According to City Councilwoman Karen Koslowitz, D-Forest Hills, the Mayor's Office is using its zip code as the justification for eliminating the program, saying that Forest Hills is financially more well off than other communities.

"It's not true," Koslowitz said. "Forest Hills is a working class community."

While the area definitely has its fair share of haves and have-nots, other local leaders said, the point is rendered moot by one simple fact: the students at the Forest Hills Beacon Program don't all hail from the immediate area.

"The idea that you're going to do an assessment based on zip code is absolutely flawed. What you're not taking into account is that most of the kids in this program are not from this zip code," Hevesi said, calling the elimination of the Beacon program one of the 'dumbest and worst' decisions the city could make.

Warren Fink, a parent with a 10-year-old daughter in the program, said he couldn't imagine what her life would be like without the program.

"She lost her mom when she was five-years-old, and the Beacon has replaced her mother in many ways," Fink said. "How do you explain to children and especially my daughter, 'you lost your mom at five, you're going to lose the Beacon at 10.'"

Fink's daughter, Meriem, said the program meant more to her than she could put into words.

"If I was not in the Beacon, I would cry, because when I'm here, I learn so much," she said.

Throughout the rally, former program students who have become mentors, parents and other local leaders, including state Sen. Toby Stavisky and Congressional candidate Grace Meng promised constant action from now until June, when the city's budget is finalized. As of now, Hevesi said, the city claims to be \$2 million short of the needed funds.

"We are going to fight very hard to keep our Beacon programs open," Koslowitz said. "These children need a place to go after school. The parents have to have peace of mind."

<http://foresthills.patch.com/articles/hundreds-rally-for-beacon-school>



Students, pols rally to save after-school programs on Staten Island

By Diane Lore

April 4, 2012

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- With the mayor's preliminary budget proposing to cut more than a third of the funding for after-school programs in the borough, Staten Island students, parents, advocates and elected officials rallied outside Tottenville High School today to urge Mayor Bloomberg to keep the programs intact.

The rally was organized by students and staff of the Jewish Community Center's successful after-school Beacon program at Tottenville, which would be the first victim of the cuts. The Beacon program is slated to close July 1 unless the budget cuts are rescinded. The center serves more than 1,300 young people from sixth-grade through high school, primarily from the South Shore.

Representatives from the Police Athletic League (PAL), United Activities Unlimited (UAU), the YMCA, and the Children's Aid Society, who also receive city funding to sponsor after-school programs, also called for rescinding the proposed cuts.

The after-school centers — referred to in the budget as Out of School Time (OST) programs — are designed to keep youngsters off the streets and in classrooms, with many offering free homework help and tutoring as well as enrichment and recreation opportunities, and are funded by the city's Department of Youth and Community Development. The programs are run out of public school buildings and operate on holidays and in the summer, as well as after school and early evening.

There are 20 such programs operating across Staten Island, but the budget anticipated for fiscal year 2013, starting July 1, only anticipates funding programs at 13 school sites, meaning seven existing programs will be cut, starting with the Beacon program at Tottenville High School.

Ironically, the Beacon center has been cited as a model program. Students in the Tottenville program have initiated several community service projects. Last year they raised money for animal rescue organizations, and last Saturday they organized a day-long fund-raiser to support **diabetes** awareness.

"The award-winning Tottenville High School Beacon program is an essential part of the efforts of this community to provide positive programs and role models for our youth," said JCC executive director David Sorkin.

"If the mayor's budget cuts to child care and after-school programs are enacted, and our Beacon program is forced to close, the void it will leave in the lives of these young people will be devastating to them and the community," he predicted.

City Councilman Vincent Ignizio (R-South Shore), said he is working with his colleagues in the Council, including Councilman James Oddo (R-Mid-Island) and Councilwoman Debi Rose (D-North Shore), to restore funding for all of the out-of-school time programs to the final budget.

Dozens of students and adults at the rally carried signs and shouted their displeasure at the cuts. Students presented Ignizio with a petition containing 1,500 signatures against the cuts, and promised more.

The councilman pointed out the irony of closing the Tottenville center at a time when his district has the highest rate of prescription **drug abuse**. "This is a program that keeps kids off the street and educates them to the danger of prescription drug abuse," he noted.

"As we go through the budget process, I will do all that I can to restore the cuts to the after-school programs, and prevent the closure of the Tottenville High School Beacon program that is vital to youth on Staten Island," Ignizio said.

http://www.silive.com/southshore/index.ssf/2012/04/students_pols_rally_to_save_af.html



Students, Parents Ask City Lawmakers To Save Tottenville High's Beacon Program

By Mara Montalbano

April 4, 2012

NY1 VIDEO: Many of the 800 students and adults serviced by the JCC Beacon Program at Tottenville High School joined together Wednesday to demand the city keep the Staten Island program going, as the city Department of Youth and Community Services proposes a \$2.1 million cuts to such programs.

<http://www.ny1.com/content/158842/students--parents-ask-city-lawmakers-to-save-tottenville-high-s-beacon-program>

Politicker

Howard Wolfson Faces Phone Blitz on Budget Cuts

By Hunter Walker

April 5, 2012

Howard Wolfson's phone was ringing off the hook yesterday. As of this writing, the deputy mayor for government affairs has received at least 1,024 calls on his office line today from constituents asking him to preserve funding for child care and after-school in the Mayor's Executive Budget. The telephone tempest was organized by Campaign for Children, a group dedicated to fighting proposed cuts to childcare and after-school programs run by the Administration for Children's Services and the Department of Youth and Community Development that were included in Mayor Michael Bloomberg's preliminary budget plan.

Mr. Wolfson earned the activist's ire by defending the mayor's budget in the media. As of this writing, Mr. Wolfson and the mayor's office have not responded to *The Politicker's* request for comment about the phone flap, but the mayor's office was quite proud of the budget when it was first rolled out. In a presentation at City Hall in February, Mayor Bloomberg praised his budget plan for closing a \$2 billion gap without tax increases or layoffs of teachers, firefighters and police officers. The mayor's proposed budget included \$437 million in cuts.

Campaign for Children is supported by several New York City politicians including Public Advocate Bill de Blasio and a slew of Council members. The campaign is also supported by over 150 local organizations including the Children's Aid Society, YMCA of Greater NY, UJA-Federation of New York and Alianza Dominicana.

<http://www.politicker.com/2012/04/05/howard-wolfson-faces-phone-blitz-on-budget-cuts/>



Hundreds rally in FH for Beacon program

By Mark Lord

April 5, 2012

“Save Our Beacon! Save Our Beacon! Save Our Beacon!”

The chant could be heard loud and clear around the block as hundreds of concerned parents and brokenhearted children crowded into the courtyard of JHS 190 in Forest Hills on Tuesday afternoon in protest of the scheduled closure of the school’s Queens Community House Beacon Program.

“Since my mom died, all the women staff are like my mom,” said 11-year-old Miriam Fink, a Forest Hills resident who attended the rally with her father, Warren, and spoke on behalf of the dozens of youngsters who take advantage of the program on a daily basis.

“Beacon is a large part of my life,” she said. “Beacon is a second family. I don’t know where I’d be without them.”

Patrick Pinchinat, Beacon director at the Forest Hills school, said closing the program, which offers educational opportunities as well as activities ranging from sports and drama to arts & crafts and mentoring, would be “impactful. This is probably the only free program in this area. There are a lot of working families in Forest Hills. They need the services.”

Pinchinat said residents in the immediate area are not the only ones who participate in the program, which welcomes families from Rego Park and Elmhurst and surrounding neighborhoods.

The Beacon program operates six days a week year round. Pinchinat estimated that 100 youngsters participate in the daily after-school activities, in addition to approximately 50 older teens and adults who benefit from the program’s evening hours. He said that, in total, approximately 1,300 families have children who attend the program annually.

Beacon programs are operated at schools throughout the city by the Department of Youth & Community Development at a cost of approximately \$340,000. The program at JHS 190 is one of several scheduled to close as of July 1, the start of the new fiscal year.

Throughout the rally, speakers called on Mayor Bloomberg to prevent the closures.

“While I understand that the task of planning the yearly budget requires difficult decisions, I ask you to not cut funding to this program based solely upon its operation in an area that is zoned as a low needs ZIP code,” said Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi (D-Forest Hills). Council member Karen Koslowitz (D-Forest Hills) agreed.

“We must stop determining service cuts based on ZIP codes,” she said. “The program is an asset to our community because it provides, through educational and social components, a safe place for kids to go after school. I needed after-school programs for my children. I would have been on welfare and food stamps” if not for such programs. “I am pleading with the administration to cross off 11375 from your list because we are not a rich community. Enough is enough,” she said.

State Sen. Toby Ann Stavisky (D-Flushing) said, “Like its lighthouse namesake, the Beacon program has been a guiding light in the community. Beacon is out there helping navigate difficult waters. There is a safe harbor. While resources are scarce, it is important not to close community-based programs. To close the program is irresponsible and insensitive to those who are in need.”

Assemblywoman Grace Meng (D-Flushing), who is running for Congress, said, cutting Beacon programs would be harmful to students and families.

“As a working mother of two, I know and understand the challenges that need to be met to keep families healthy” Meng said.

The mayor’s plan, which would have to be approved by the City Council, calls for \$2.1 million to be cut from the DYCD, leading to the closing of seven of the city’s 81 Beacon programs.

Nicole Kitiashwili, 12, has been participating in the program for three years.

“Beacon has taught me lessons I will remember all my life, she said.”

Lena Polt, who lives in Rego Park, has two children in the program.

“Thanks to Beacon I am able to work and I’m off public assistance,” Polt said.

The Campaign for Children has been urging New Yorkers to take action by calling city leaders to express their dissatisfaction with the planned closings and to ask for the restoration of the funding to save the endangered programs.

A partnership of The Emergency Coalition to Save Child Care and the NYC Youth Alliance has planned a rally in City Hall Park on Tuesday, April 17 at 3:30 p.m.

http://www.qchron.com/editions/central/hundreds-rally-in-fh-for-beacon-program/article_6ca16b95-9cca-5855-93a3-6159574e0402.html



Support keeps rolling in for Forest Hills Beacon Program

By Lisa A. Fraser

April 10, 2012

Local elected officials and community leaders are continuing to drum up support for the threatened Forest Hills Beacon program at Junior High School 190.

Last Tuesday, elected officials and hundreds of community members rallied outside of the Russell Sage Junior High School, demanding that the mayor reconsider cutting funds for what many call an imperative program to the community.

"It is unbelievable that the city continues to justify the closure of the Queens Community House Beacon at JHS 190 using a completely flawed methodology," said Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, who threw his support behind saving the program since it was first announced that it was on the chopping block.

"The decision to close this Beacon will displace more than a thousand students who travel from all across Queens, and leave parents in the awful position of choosing to leave their kids alone after school or quit their jobs," he added. "From a policy standpoint of considering the short and long term costs, and the potential harm to children and working adults, this is an incredibly bad policy decision."

The program, which is the temporary home for dozens of children from across Queens in the after-school hours, is hosted by the Queens Community House.

Hevesi and Councilwoman Karen Kowalski say that the justification for closing the program is because the Forest Hills zip code where it is located is financially more well-off than other parts of the city.

They say that is unfair.

"Forest Hills is a working-class community," Kowalski said.

Her statement was echoed by many parents and Patrick Pinchinat, the program's director, who noted that the program's popularity has allowed it to serve on average over 1,100 students each year, despite its contractual obligation with the city only requiring the enrollment of 950 students.

The cuts to the program are part of the \$2.1 million in cuts to the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), which Mayor Bloomberg has called for in an effort to save the city [money](#) for Fiscal Year 2013.

The Campaign for Children recently became involved, urging Bloomberg to reconsider his plans to cut not just the J.H.S. 190-based Beacon program, but another at M.S. 158 in Bayside, and five others across the city.

“This is not a decision taken lightly, and we appreciate how valuable our 80 Beacon programs are to families across the city,” said DYCD spokesperson Cathleen Collins.

It's not a decision parents are taking lightly either. One parent, Tonia Calvo, whose 11-year-old son participates in the program, said she doesn't want to lose the “safe and educational place” for her son.

“The Queens Community House Beacon program provides my son with opportunities I couldn't give him otherwise – help with academics, exposure to arts and music programming and other activities that help him succeed in school,” Calvo said. “I'm losing a safe and educational place for my son to be while I work, and that's a tragedy.”

State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky and Assemblywoman Grace Meng were also on hand to show support. They promised that they would also continue to actively fight for the program until June, when the city's budget is finalized.

At the rally, Beacon mentors who were once Beacon students continued to pledge their support to saving the program. Pinchinat said that his staff, as well as the students who benefit from the program, will not give up fighting to save it.

“It's disheartening, you never want to see your program on the list, but we will continue to advocate,” he said. “We have proof and evidence to support what we do.”

http://www.foresthillstimes.com/view/full_story/18189344/article-Support-keeps-rolling-in-for-Forest-Hills-Beacon-program-?instance=home_news_right#ixzz1rjvIHvVM

WALL STREET JOURNAL

Quinn: Proposed NYC Budget Cuts “unacceptable”

ASSOCIATED PRESS

April 11, 2012

NEW YORK — New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn says Mayor Michael Bloomberg's proposed budget for the next fiscal year has some "unacceptable" cuts in it.

She and Councilmember Domenic Recchia Jr. said Wednesday that the preliminary budget contains cuts to city-subsidized child care [slots](#) and after-school programs, and allows for further reductions in teachers through attrition.

They say the cuts would shortchange the city's children.

Bloomberg spokeswoman Lauren Passalacqua said the city was working with the council on a budget "that meets our financial responsibilities and also protects services."

Officials still have three months to come to an agreement on the budget, during which time the mayor must issue a final proposal and then hammer out the details with the council.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/AP838adf5b56cd4c6198a1eef32619c2a8.html>

‘Devastating’ cuts loom for daycare

By Tina Moore

April 16, 2012

For public housing resident Wanda Marte, losing city subsidized childcare at the Hudson Guild in Chelsea would mean parting with a service that gives her a fighting chance to get ahead.

“I don’t know what I would do,” Marte said recently at the nonprofit on W. 26th St. “It’s very good to have a place like this. It gives us parents an opportunity to go work and have a better life.”

Marte, 38, moved into the Elliott-Chelsea Houses next to the center — and a short walk from trendy cafes and galleries — in March after a year in a shelter.

Now, the program she depends on for childcare, and many others like it across the city, are imperiled by proposed cuts — simply because the providers are located in predominantly wealthy areas.

An analysis from United Neighborhood Houses released to the Daily News shows the Bloomberg administration is determining which nonprofits should get childcare funding based largely on a zip code’s affluence.

“In the absence of (budget) [money](#), they are having to come up with these bizarre schemes,” said Nancy Wackstein, the advocacy group’s executive director.

Her organization said the cuts will mean the loss of 47,000 [slots](#) for children in childcare and after-school programs.

The Administration for Children’s Services, which funds subsidized daycare, created targeted and nontargeted zip codes based on income and other factors, officials said.

ACS Commissioner Ronald Richter noted that 82% of the money for childcare will be distributed in the areas his agency defined as targeted.

“In a community like Chelsea, where there may be a couple of hundred eligible children, we as the government agency responsible for allocating limited resources have to look at it in comparison to another area where there may be thousands of eligible children,” Richter said.

The agency will lose nearly 9,000 daycare seats in October, a spokesman said, and another 7,700 children who receive [vouchers](#) for services will lose funding.

“The fact that there are people who live in 6,000-square-foot lofts overlooking the High Line is essentially eliminating services for children who live in public housing a block away,” Ken Jockers, Hudson Guild’s executive director, said.

Department of Youth and Community Development spokeswoman Cathleen Collins said the agency would be using 70% of its after-school funding in zip codes it determines have more needy residents.

The number of spots available to children in city-subsidized after-school [programs](#) could drop by nearly half — from 53,000 in July 2012 to about 29,000 in July 2013, her office said.

“These cuts they’re proposing would be devastating,” City Councilman Stephen Levin (D-Brooklyn) said. “I represent some zip codes that have a high income, but have pockets of poverty.”

http://articles.nydailynews.com/2012-04-16/news/31346135_1_zip-codes-childcare-public-housing

The New York Times

Touched by Bloodshed, Working Now to Spare Others

By Peter Moskowitz

April 16, 2012

Last month, Tameeka Ford Norville was sitting in her lilac-colored office at the Ingersoll Community Center in Fort Greene, Brooklyn, where she runs an after-school program, when the phone rang. Shots had been fired in the housing projects next door, a resident told her. Ms. Ford Norville locked the center's doors and told her staff to make sure the children were accounted for.

Then she sat in her office and cried.

A feeling of hopelessness, all too familiar to Ms. Ford Norville, came rushing over her. She had first felt it when her 26-year-old brother, Jamal Ford, was murdered in East New York six years ago. The killer was 16.

This time it was a 21-year-old man who had been killed, she later learned. The following day in the same housing complex, a young man was wounded by gunfire.

Since her brother's murder, Ms. Ford Norville, 39, has made it her mission to keep teenagers, especially black teenagers, like the one who shot Jamal, off the streets. She works up to 50 hours a week to engage them in conversations, basketball, video production – anything constructive.

But Ms. Ford Norville is worried about the future of the eight after-school programs she directs; five are in Brooklyn and three are in Manhattan.

The Campaign for Children, an advocacy group for New York City nonprofit organizations that work with children, said Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's proposed budget could eliminate 47,000 spots in child care and after-school programs citywide. About 80 percent of the financing for Ms. Ford Norville's programs comes from the city.

These days, Ms. Ford Norville fears an end to some or all of her programs, and an increase in the kind of violence that left her brother dead.

The killing was completely random, she said.

All she knows of Jamal's final moments is what she could cull from police reports: He stepped off a city bus on Pennsylvania Avenue and quickly became embroiled in a shouting match with some youths. After a few minutes, Jamal walked away. That's when he was shot, in the back.

The death followed Ms. Ford Norville everywhere. Usually cheery, an obsessively dedicated worker, she became a bedridden mess. "I was like, I can't even save my own brother, how can I be out here professing to save other people's kids?" she said.

Consumed with grief, she was on the verge of quitting her job as the director of after-school programs at University Settlement.

When she was not in bed crying, she would stare out the front window of her brownstone in Bedford Stuyvesant. She would look at the ledge outside her front door, where Jamal used to sit, and wait for him to appear.

Then, with help from her family and her faith, Ms. Ford Norville pulled herself together. It took a few weeks, but she returned to work with a new passion to help troubled teenagers who might otherwise be drawn to violence, like the one who shot her brother.

“He was a wayward kid; he got kicked out of school,” said Ms. Ford Norville, who has worked for University Settlement for 14 years. “A community as a whole didn’t embrace him, and those are the same kids who come here,” she said, referring to the Ingersoll Community Center.

Her job is mostly administrative now – doling out the budget, answering e-mails – but her face lights up whenever she gets to interact with children. She tries to spend time with them as much as possible, even if it means staying at the community center until 9 many nights, coaching basketball games.

“Ms. Tameeka plays a huge role in our sense of family,” said Edith Sneed, 13, who visits the center after school. “If we have a problem, she’ll sit down and explain, “I’ve been through this.”

Thomas Peterson, a shy 13-year-old who lives in the Farragut housing project a few blocks away, said he went to the Ingersoll center because he was afraid that if he did not, he would get involved with a bad crowd.

“A lot of people that don’t have nothing to do with their time do something foolish,” he said. “Foolish,” according to Thomas, means anything from throwing things at people to joining a gang.

The idea of someone like Thomas joining a gang is what makes Ms. Ford Norville so worried about the possibility of cuts to programs like hers.

The two recent shootings next to the Ingersoll Community Center renewed her belief that without structure, young men can fall into violent lives.

She said she still asks herself whether her brother would be alive today if his killer had attended a place like the Ingersoll center.

“I say yes,” she said, “and I strongly, strongly, believe that.”

On April 26, Mr. Bloomberg is expected to release his executive budget. Nine days later, Ms. Ford Norville, along with her extended family, will cook dinner in her home. She will serve chicken, collard greens and banana pudding – her brother’s favorite foods. It will be the seventh anniversary of his death.

<http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/04/16/touched-by-bloodshed-working-now-to-spare-others/>



Poor in Wealthy Neighborhoods Miss Out on Services: Report

By Cindy Rodriguez

April 16, 2012

As the city targets where to keep subsidized child care and after school programs, public housing developments in wealthy neighborhoods are getting overlooked, according to a report by United Neighborhood Houses.

The report estimates 77,000 public housing residents are living in what the city has deemed as low-need areas for subsidized child care and after school programs. The developments in wealthy districts include the Eliot Houses in Chelsea and the Amsterdam Houses near Lincoln Center.

“We’re talking about subsidized childcare and subsidized after school [programs]. They cannot afford to pay market rate for these services even if they happen to be living in a wealthy area,” said Nancy Wackstein, executive director of United Neighborhood Houses. The group advocates for settlement houses which hold some city contracts for after school and child care programs.

Wackstein argues that someone living in public housing on Manhattan’s Upper West Side is just as needy as someone living in Brownsville, Brooklyn.

The city is slated to cut 8,200 childcare subsidies and 24,000 — or nearly half of all — after school slots in fiscal year 2013.

Last year, funding was restored at the last minute for many programs.

Wackstein said this year the dimensions of the problem are much larger, especially when it comes to after school programs.

The Administration for Children’s Services, which oversees the city’s subsidized child care, said in a written statement that its priority is to place subsidized child care where most low-income families live making it easily accessible for them. The agency said beyond looking at child poverty rates in an area, it also considered concentrations of subsidized housing.

The Department of Youth and Community Development said when deciding where to fund after school programs, it considers data on youth in poverty, as well as the number of non-English speakers. The agency said 30 percent of funding would still go to neighborhoods deemed as low priority.

<http://www.wnyc.org/blogs/wnyc-news-blog/2012/apr/16/poor-wealthy-neighborhoods-miss-out-services-says-report/>

Christine Quinn: Mayor Bloomberg's Child Care Cuts 'Unacceptable'

By Saki Knafo

April 17, 2012

Hundreds of parents, children and teachers gathered on the steps of New York's City Hall Tuesday to protest Mayor Michael Bloomberg's budget plan, which calls for big cuts to city early childhood education and after-school programs.

The rally was organized by the Campaign for Children, a coalition of more than 150 New York organizations that oppose the cuts. Last month, in his preliminary budget proposal, Bloomberg proposed cutting \$170 million for children's services. The coalition has urged him to reconsider. Funding for childcare and after-school programs has dropped each year since 2009, and the city's subsidized child care and after-school systems serve 43,000 fewer children than they did five years ago. If the mayor's new cuts go through, that number will decline by an additional 47,000 slots.

Earlier this week, Christine Quinn, the speaker of City Council and arguably Bloomberg's heir apparent, called the cuts "unacceptable."

On Tuesday, three caucuses within the City Council -- the Progressive Caucus, the Women's Caucus, and the Black, Latino and Asian Caucus -- echoed that opposition in letters to the mayor. And at the rally, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stinger, Councilman Lew Fidler, and other politicians and advocates joined the chorus of criticism. "I believe that after-school programs and child care programs are not luxuries, they're necessities," said Councilman James Vacca.

Samantha Levine, deputy press secretary for the mayor's office, called the city's early child care "among the most generous and comprehensive." She alluded to Early Learn NYC, an effort by the Bloomberg administration to improve the quality of publicly funded child care. Starting in the fall, the administration plans to roll out this new system, which it claims will allow it to weed out weaker child care providers. While the change may help some kids, it will also cost more, meaning fewer kids will have an opportunity to reap those benefits and some high-quality centers may be forced to close.

The debate over child care comes at a critical time for children. Over the last decade, child poverty has increased by 18 percent, according to a report last year by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and one in four children in New York live beneath the poverty line. At the same time, the last 10 years have seen researchers gathering a mass of data attesting to the vital importance of early childhood education in

helping kids climb out of poverty. The Nobel-prize winning economist James Heckman found that every dollar invested in pre-school eventually yields a return of \$7 to \$9 as the pre-school alumni graduate from high school and college and enter the work force. Other studies have focused on the role of child care in insulating children's brains from "toxic stress," the stress hormones found in destructive quantities in the brains of children who grow up in poor families and poor neighborhoods.

New York is hardly the only battleground for debates over child care. Rep. Paul Ryan's recent budget proposal called for massive cuts to the early childhood program Head Start, and the Obama administration is requiring some Head Start providers to compete for funding, raising the ire of many early-childhood-education providers and advocates, who have filed a lawsuit against the administration.

At the rally, as the politicians took turns addressing the crowd, a group of women stood off to the side, taking in the shade on the border of City Hall park. They said they worked at a Head Start program run by the Police Athletic League, one of the groups that make up the Campaign for Children. And like many Head Start teachers, they first got involved with the program as parents of young children.

Natasha Coates rattled off a list of all the things her son had learned in Head Start -- the alphabet, "sight reading," social skills. "Wow, Davonte was awesome," she said. Another teacher, Linda Muniz, chimed in. "With the Head Start, I really learned how to prepare my son for kindergarten," she said. "He went through the ranks of school, he's in college now."

Muniz said she worked until recently at a center in Brooklyn that will close if it loses its city funding. Some of her former colleagues might lose their jobs, she said. And some of the parents in the neighborhood might lose an opportunity to give their kids an educational boost that could translate to a good job in the future.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/04/17/christine-quinn-mayor-bloomberg-child-care_n_1432818.html

Concerned Bronx pols and advocates visit borough childcare center, one of several threatened by city cuts

By Corinne Lestch

April 18, 2012

More than 47,000 children will be cut off from childcare services across the city if Mayor Bloomberg's proposed budget for 2013 is approved, according to a report to be unveiled Wednesday.

Over the past three years, the number of children from low-income families receiving childcare subsidies in the Bronx has decreased by 20%, from serving 13,641 kids in 2009 to 11,032 kids this year,

according to the report compiled by the Campaign for Children,

Councilwoman Annabel Palma (D-Bronx), advocates and families will visit the Children's Aid Society's Bronx Family Center in Claremont Village Wednesday to discuss the negative impact.

"While Mayor Bloomberg continues to claim that [education](#) is one of his administration's highest priorities, the reality is...he has proposed deep cuts to both early childhood education and afterschool programs," said Palma, chair of the council's Committee on General Welfare.

The report highlights different initiatives like the Out of School Time afterschool program, which is facing a 43% reduction, and the Beacon afterschool program, whose presence will soon be diminished in all five boroughs.

The Daily News reported this month that seven Beacon sites across the city will close in July.

Phipps Community Development at Intermediate School 192 in Schuylerville alone serves about 1,300 families each year.

Cathleen Collins, a spokeswoman for the Department of Youth and Community Development, said those cuts were "not a decision taken lightly."

However, "given limited options to meet the \$2.1 million financial gap, it was determined that seven Beacons would close," she said in a statement.

LaChelle Walker, administrative director of the Bronx Family Center, said a freeze on enrolling tots last summer left parents helpless. Since the center is funded by the Administration for Children's Services, parents need to work in order to even qualify for childcare.

"Families were desperate for childcare, (and) we had to turn them away," Walker said. "It put a lot of families in jeopardy."

For single parent Augustina Constance, she simply cannot afford a babysitter.

"This program has helped my kids be prepared to start school and [help](#) me keep my job and support my family," she said.

http://articles.nydailynews.com/2012-04-18/news/31363448_1_childcare-families-single-parent

Council Members Join Parents in Call for Child Care and After-School Funding

By NYNP

April 18, 2012

Hundreds of children, parents and providers gathered at City Hall Park yesterday urging Mayor Bloomberg not to cut child care and after-school programs for 47,000 children. In a show of support, three City Council Caucuses – the Black, Latino, and Asian Caucus; the Women’s Caucus; and the Progressive Caucus – released statements calling for full funding of child care and after-school programs in his Executive Budget.

“By enacting these cuts, the Bloomberg Administration’s actions will, yet again, run counter to his own claim to a legacy of strengthening the system, ensuring college and career readiness for Black, Latino and Asian youth, and stabilizing the City’s economy,” said a statement from the City Council Black, Latino and Asian Caucus.

“These cuts will have severe ramifications, particularly for low-income, working mothers and their children,” said a statement from the City Council Women’s Caucus. “We urge the Administration to fully fund the subsidized child care and after-school systems.”

“Substantially cutting child care and after-school programs flies in the face of the values of our Caucus, said a statement from the City Council Progressive Caucus. “These cuts will leave low-income working parents who are striving to achieve economic stability with the untenable choice of quitting their jobs or potentially leaving their children in unsafe care while they work.”

Children and parents were joined by elected officials and advocates from the Campaign for Children, who kicked off the rally with a press conference calling on the Mayor to prioritize funding for child care and after-school programs in the budget.

“We provide our community with safe, affordable and educational child care and after-school programs – programs that not only put children on the path to success, but allow parents to keep their jobs,” said Carolyn McLaughlin, Executive Director of BronxWorks. “I know that times are tough, but why would the city want to deprive working families of the programs they rely on? I’m here to tell the Mayor that these cuts just don’t make sense.”

“Last year, the City Council made it a top priority to restore tens of millions of dollars for subsidized child care and after-school programs because we understood that these programs are a lifeline for working families and their children,” said Council Member Annabel Palma, Chair of the Council’s Committee on

General Welfare. “Unfortunately, the Mayor doesn’t seem to get it and his Preliminary Budget, combined with the reforms laid out in the EarlyLearn and OST RFPs, would once again slash child care and after-school programs for nearly 50,000 children. Today, we stand together to tell the Mayor that we expect better for our children. I sincerely hope that he gets the message and works with the Council to produce a responsible budget that will prevent these devastating cuts.”

“The cuts to our after school programs are severe and truly justify the charge that City budget is being balanced on the back of our children,” said Council Member Lew Fidler, Chairman of the Youth Services Committee. We will be damaging the education of these kids. We will be creating a new generation of latch key kids, and if we have learned nothing else from history, we know that the pennies we save by these cuts will cost us dollars in police and criminal justice services next year. We have an obligation to make available good choices for kids, and if we don't it won't be entirely their fault when they make bad choices. We cannot pass a budget that does so many bad things to kids.”

<http://www.nynp.biz/index.php/breaking-news/9986-council-members-join-parents-in-call-for-child-care-and-after-school-fundingparents-and-council-members->



Parents, students protest child care cuts at Borough Hall

April 19, 2012

BROOKLYN - Parents and students joined politicians at Borough Hall today to protest Mayor Michael Bloomberg's proposed cuts to child care and after-school programs.

According to the Campaign for Children, the proposed budget cuts would affect more than 47,000 children. Students who attend programs at child care centers say they do not want them to be eliminated.

The Campaign for Children says even if the cuts are not approved, some children will still be left out of the programs because of a systematic decrease in funding.

http://www.news12.com/articleDetail.jsp?articleId=316836&position=1&news_type=news



Closing Bell: Rally for After-School & Childcare Tomorrow

By Emily

April 18, 2012



Above is a shot from yesterday's City Hall rally to protest city budget cuts to after-school programs and childcare; tomorrow, the advocacy group Campaign for Children will continue to rally at Borough Hall. Campaign for Children will join Marty Markowitz to protest the mayor's preliminary budget proposal to cut more than 47,000 children from child care and after-school programs. According to CFC, "This is the fifth straight year that the Mayor has cut child care and after-school programs. Added to year after year of cuts, the Mayor's latest proposal will result in 90,000 fewer children having access to these programs than in 2009 – a 61% decrease." Parents, children, teachers, and anyone interested are invited to the rally tomorrow, April 19th, 4pm at Brooklyn Borough Hall, 209 Joralemon Street.

<http://www.brownstoner.com/blog/2012/04/closing-bell-rally-for-after-school-childcare-tomorrow/?stream=true>



Child care funding faces budget cuts

April 22, 2012

Queens parents, advocates and elected officials rallied together on Thursday, April 19 to urge Mayor Michael Bloomberg to fully fund child care and after-school in his Executive Budget.

At Thursday's rally at Queens Borough Hall, Campaign for Children released a report detailing the devastating impact Mayor Bloomberg's proposed cuts would have on Queens children and working families. The mayor's preliminary budget is proposing to cut more than 47,000 children from child care and after-school programs.

Queens residents have already experienced steep reductions in subsidized child care and after-school programs, and the mayor's newest cuts will further reduce the number of safe and affordable child care options available to working families. Indeed, the mayor already announced last month that the city will close two Queens Beacon after-school programs in July, which together serve more than 2,400 Queens residents each year.

·Child Care: In the past three years, the number of children from low-income working families receiving child care subsidies in Queens has declined by nearly 23 percent. The citywide cut of 15,900 child care subsidies will further decrease the availability of child care for low-income working families in the Bronx.

·After-school: The Out of School Time (OST) after-school program – which has already shrunk by more than 35,000 youth citywide since 2009 – is facing a 39 percent reduction in programs in Queens, going from 83 programs to just 51 programs for the entire borough.

"When I leave my son at child care, I know he's learning and getting to participate in arts and activities that will help him succeed in school," said Lily Mamonov from Forest Hills, Queens. "If I lose child care, how will I know my son is safe and getting the education he needs while I'm at work? If I don't have that option, I can't keep my job – and that's not good for him, for my family, or for our community."

"Under the mayor's proposed budget, thousands of young people in Queens will be left without educational, enriching afterschool programs that help them succeed in school and thousands of parents will be forced to scramble to find safe, affordable childcare while they work," said David Slotnick, program director of Youth & Camping Services at the Samuel Field Y.

"These cuts will be devastating to the working families of Queens who rely on Beacon Programs to operate during school days, school holidays and summers. The Beacon programs have been very successful in addressing the needs of the community by ensuring that at-risk youth and youth that weren't achieving their potential have a safe haven where they can gain successful outcomes and we are deeply concerned that the loss of these programs will destabilize neighborhoods and erode all of the important accomplishments that now characterize them," said Slotnick.

"Child care and after-school programs provide children with critical educational opportunities that pave the way for future success," said Queens Borough President Helen Marshall, herself a former early childhood teacher. "Youngsters who attend these programs do better in school, are more likely to graduate and have lower incidents of violence, drug abuse and teen pregnancy."

About The Cuts

After years of cuts that have dramatically decreased working families' access to children's and youth services, the mayor is once again proposing devastating cuts to both child care and after-school programs in his FY 2013 budget.

The Mayor's Preliminary Budget, coupled with changes from the EarlyLearn NYC and Out-of-school Time (OST) RFPs, would eliminate 15,900 child care slots and slash after-school program capacity for 31,800 children. All told, more than 47,000 children and their families will lose access to these essential programs. This is the fifth straight year that the mayor has cut child care and after-school programs. Added to year after year of cuts, the mayor's latest proposal will result in 90,000 fewer children having access to these programs than in 2009 – a 61 percent decrease.

The Bloomberg Administration's failure to fund these core services is a disturbing departure from its stated desire to make education reforms and economic development the mayor's top priorities and the foundation of his legacy. As the mayor himself recently stated, "what happens after the final school bell of the day rings is as important to students as what goes on in the classrooms."

Both child care and after-school programs provide children with critical educational opportunities that pave the way for future success, and allow parents to maintain jobs and support their families while their children receive safe, affordable care.

The mayor is taking notable steps to restructure the child care and after-school systems to increase the quality of the programs citywide – but is, at the same time, cutting funding significantly so that the programs will serve a fraction of the children.

http://www.caribbeanlifeneews.com/stories/2012/4/2012_04_20_sub_school_cuts.html

Child services on the budget chopping block, again

By John Bayles

April 25, 2012

On Tuesday, April 17, the sidewalk along Broadway near City Hall was packed with parents and kids rallying to save after school programs that are once again on the chopping block.

In March, Mayor Bloomberg released the preliminary budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year that included \$170 million in cuts to children's services. The rally was organized by Campaign for Children, a coalition made up of more than 150 New York City organizations.

The Campaign for Children website states, "Mayor Bloomberg's sweeping cuts to child care and after-school programs are an assault on New York City's children and working families. Without access to these programs, more than 47,000 children will be denied the opportunities they need for success, and their working parents will be forced to make potentially unsafe arrangements for their children in order to keep their jobs."

There's nothing new about a proposed budget targeting childcare services as an area where dollars can be saved. But the difference this time around, according to Manhattan Youth founder and president Bob Townley is the magnitude of the cuts.

"The cuts are much higher than before," said Townley. "The magnitude is always important and it's really important to understand that these programs have not been expanded even in good times."

Townley mentioned the fact that the programs his organization offers seem to always face cuts, even when economic times are good.

"We could take a one percent cut during bad times, but we should be getting the five percent increase during the good times," said Townley.

Townley recalled a period in the city's history when Community Boards had "vibrant" staff, when there were Community School Boards with unlimited resources and when communities even had government money for "planning boards." Those times have come and gone.

"Frankly I'm sick of each spring having to devote time to fighting for these programs," said Townley. "I may sound ungrateful - its hard enough running the program year round, but every year, the staff thinks they're losing their job and has to devote time to rallies and spreading the word about the cuts."

Noting the success of organizations like the Downtown Little League, Townley said, "The little leagues are for little kids, but in middle school, when kids are fighting obesity and their parents are working [these services are crucial]."

Asked if he was looking forward to a new mayor in 2013, Townley pointed out that the mayor is not the entire problem. But he did state that Mayor Bloomberg simply isn't "cut" in a way that allows him to focus on the "little guy" and "the little programs" and that the city needs a mayor that believes in a commitment to community based programming.

Townley believes the answer is an overall transformation of how community based programming is viewed in the eyes of government. He pointed out that even Governor Andrew Cuomo's state budget included cuts to child services.

"After school programs are so low on the totem pole and that has to change," said Townley.

<http://www.downtownexpress.com/?p=9465>



Queens children push on in last efforts to save after-school programs

By Lisa A. Fraser

April 25, 2012

They poured out of the buses with signs in hands, messages on their faces, and determination in their voices. Some had smiles, some looked angry, and others displayed concern.

There were hundreds of them. They blocked the sidewalk outside of Queens Borough Hall and quickly filled up the stairs to the Kew Gardens building, all of them repeatedly chanting, "No more cuts!" and "Save our Beacon!"

It was the united cry of hundreds of children who take part in after-school programs around the borough, all of them demanding that the mayor and city think twice before cutting the funding on vital after-school programs.

It was an elaborate display aimed at changing the mayor's mind and one of the final calls before the July 1 deadline when the budget takes effect.

"I love my Beacon program," said Yasmin Kashef, a sixth-grader who attends Forest Hills' Junior High School 190 Beacon program, last Thursday.

"I hope the mayor doesn't cut it because I don't know where I'll go," she said. "They really take care of us."

The students were not alone. In addition to their after-school mentors, they had Queens Borough President Helen Marshall on their side, as well as other elected officials, including Councilmen Mark Weprin and James Sanders and Assemblywoman Grace Meng.

"We're going to make sure that everybody hears us, from the mayor to the governor," Marshall, surrounded by children, said. "We're going to work hard to make sure these programs stay open."

Marshall said that growing up she enjoyed after-school programs and she knows how vital they are to a child's development.

"I'm so proud of you for coming out," she told the students. "You are representing all the children in our borough and the city whose programs are being threatened."

The rally was organized by the children's advocacy group, Campaign for Children. After school programs including the J.H.S. 190 Beacon, the M.S. 158 Beacon, Out of School Time (OST) and the Sports and Arts in Schools Foundation (SASF) urged the mayor to reconsider fully funding the programs in the city's Fiscal Year 2013 budget.

The cuts to the programs are part of the \$2.1 million in cuts to the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), which Mayor Bloomberg has called for in an effort to save the city money for Fiscal Year 2013.

Although DYCD spokesperson Cathleen Collins said that it is not a decision taken lightly, others say there is no room to consider withdrawing funding for the young population.

“We cannot balance the budget on the backs of students,” said Jim O’Neill, executive director of OST.

Weprin called the programs “essential to the education of our children.”

“They are in a safe, good place where they learn and have fun,” he said.

According to The Campaign for Children, more than 47,000 children and their families citywide would lose access to the programs if cut. And adding to year-after-year of cuts, the latest proposal would result in 90,000 fewer children having access to the programs compared to 2009 – a 61 percent decrease.

In Queens, OST currently runs 83 programs. Unless the cuts are restored, those programs would be cut to 51. Cutting the two Beacon programs in the borough would affect more than 2,400 children.

“At this point we’re choosing between needy children and needy children,” said Katherine Eckstein, director of public policy at The Children’s Aid Society and a member of the Campaign for Children. “Given that Mayor Bloomberg has championed education so much, there’s a disconnect with these cuts.”

After the rally, groups of children and their mentors continued to chant, an indication that they won’t give up without a fight.

“They are very optimistic and enthusiastic,” said Lorraine O’Connell a counselor at Beacon 190. “We’re hoping that all the Beacons on the list have a fighting chance, and we do because we’ll keep fighting. We have way too many kids in our program to let it shut down so easily.”

One parent, Warren Fink, whose daughter Miriam also attends the J.H.S 190 Beacon, said the program has allowed her to make friends and offers a place to be active every day since her gym class in school was cut to one day a week.

“I’m a single parent. She lost her mom five years ago and this program is like her mother,” said the Forest Hills resident. “How do you tell your 10 year old, ‘I’m really sorry, but you lost your mother again?’”

http://www.foresthillstimes.com/view/full_story/18354144/article-Queens-children-push-on-in-last-efforts-to-save-after-school-programs?instance=home_news_right#ixzz1tBZ1S4lw

Cuts to child care programs loom

By Billy Rennison

April 26, 2012

City budgetary cuts may produce thousands of “latch key” Queens children if funds to day care and after-school programs remain slashed.

Allocations to the Administration for Children’s Services is down more than \$30 million in the city’s preliminary budget for the 2013 Fiscal Year.

“Thousands of families won’t be able to have access to affordable child care,” said Gregory Brender, policy advisor for United Neighborhood Houses. “They’ll face a horrible choice of leaving their kids at home or not going to work. We can’t have these children become latch key kids.”

Since 2009, more than 43,000 city children lost access to child care programs. If funding is not restored, 47,000 families may lose access to child care and after-school programs — 15,900 child care slots and 31,800 after-school program spots, according to the Campaign for Children.

If the cuts are made, 90,000 fewer children will have access to these programs than in 2009 — a 61 percent decrease. The free Out of School Time (OST) after school program is facing a 39 percent reduction in programs in Queens, going from 83 programs to 51 programs for the entire borough, the campaign said.

Specific programs have not been targeted, though Brender said the Administration for Children’s Services has created targeted and non-targeted zip codes for the remaining funds.

The lack of affordable child care goes further than just denying children a place to go when their parents are at work, Brender said it prevents educational opportunities. “Early childhood programs set up the skills you need later in life, develops literacy, provides homework help, the arts and a place to be active instead of being stuck at home,” he said.

Last year, the city council restored \$13.6 million for nearly 5,000 child care vouchers for school-aged children. The 2013 Fiscal Year begins on July 1.

Procuring the money for these programs from another source is not a feasible option, according to Brender.

“I think for the overwhelming majority these programs will be lost; there are not private funds to keep these programs going,” Brender said. “We need the city to make the investment.”

<http://queenscourier.com/2012/cuts-to-child-care-programs-loom/>



Small fists raised, a protest against cuts

By Anna Gustafson

April 26, 2012

Pumping their fists into the air and jumping up and down on the steps of Borough Hall in Kew Gardens, hundreds of children protested last week against Mayor Bloomberg's proposal to slash the number of after-school programs in Queens by nearly 40 percent.

Because of cuts to the city Department of Youth and Community Development Bloomberg has outlined in his preliminary budget, what are known as Out of School Time programs would shrink from 83 to 51 sites in Queens. The cuts to the free after-school programs, which would have to be approved by the City Council to be implemented, would impact thousands of Queens students from all corners of the borough.

The mayor has also proposed axing two Beacon programs —community centers that serve people of all ages — in Queens, one at JHS 190 in Forest Hills and another at MS 158 in Bayside.

"I'd be really sad if it closed because some of us have been in this program since we were babies, and it has really helped us learn how to communicate," said Srithi Bhatia, 11, who attends the Chinese American Planning Council after-school site in Flushing. "It helps us with homework, and that's really important."

The mayor's office did not respond to a request for comment, but the administration has said it is trying to improve child care in its proposed budget by implementing a new early childhood program throughout the city, called EarlyLearn NYC.

The students, bedecked with colorful homemade signs, were joined by a bevy of program leaders and legislators at last Thursday's protest, many of whom lamented city cuts to after-school programs in recent years.

Slots in OST programs have dropped sharply in recent years, going from 85,513 seats in 2009 to about 52,000 in 2012 — a decrease of nearly 40 percent.

The decision to chop certain programs stems from which ZIP code they fall in — so areas like Bayside and Forest Hills are particularly hard-hit because they are home to some of the borough's wealthiest residents. However, after-school leaders cautioned that the programs often serve students from throughout the borough, not just the immediate area. Additionally, they noted that many parents who live in wealthier areas are not themselves rich, and rely on the after-school programs because they're working more than one job.

“These so-called affluent areas have many kids who are low-income,” said Jim O’Neill, president of the Sports and Arts in School Foundation, which is based in Woodside but operates free after-school sites throughout the five boroughs, including at PS 116 in Jamaica. “These are free programs that parents need. They cannot afford to send their children to any other program.”

David Slotnick, program director of youth and camping services at the Samuel Field Y, which runs the Beacon facility at MS 158, stressed that the programs not only offer recreational opportunities — such as sports, music and art —but a wide variety of programs designed to help children with schoolwork.

“These cuts will be devastating to the working families of Queens, who rely on Beacon programs to operate during school days, school holidays and summers,” Slotnick said. “The Beacon programs have been very successful in addressing the needs of the community by ensuring that at-risk youth, and youth that weren’t achieving their potential, have a safe haven where they can gain successful outcomes. We are deeply concerned that the loss of these programs will destabilize neighborhoods and erode all of the important accomplishments that now characterize them.”

A number of officials spoke against the mayor’s proposal, including Borough President Helen Marshall, Assemblywoman Grace Meng (D-Flushing), Councilman Mark Weprin (D-Oakland Gardens), Assemblyman Rory Lancman (D-Fresh Meadows), and Donovan Richards, a representative from the office of Councilman James Sanders (D-Laurelton).

“Youngsters who attend these programs do better in school, are more likely to graduate and have lower incidents of violence, drug abuse and teen pregnancy,” Marshall said.

Weprin emphasized that the programs are “essential in middle-class neighborhoods where parents are working,” and Lancman said “after-school programs are every bit as important as what happens during the school day.”

Meng agreed, saying the cuts “would be a slap in the face to all working parents.”

http://www.qchron.com/editions/queenswide/small-fists-raised-a-protest-against-cuts/article_bf2ab78d-c1f9-5c0f-8db5-5aec149a484d.html

Readers sound off on Christine Quinn, child care and schools

By Regina Sears-Muschett

April 27, 2012

Child care should be Job One

Manhattan: [Mayor Bloomberg](#) has proposed cutting an estimated 16,500 day care slots, which would force mothers and providers out of work and leave them dependent on welfare or unemployment (“‘Devastating’ cuts,” April 16).

When the city started its welfare-to-work program in 1996, I was one of those women who said goodbye to the welfare rolls and hello to a paycheck as a result becoming a licensed child care provider. I have provided excellent service to countless children and their mothers these 15 years.

Without funding for subsidized child care, I would not have been able to continue my education or educate my children. I was grateful for the help. I feel that mothers today should be afforded the same opportunity.

Mayor Bloomberg, I implore you to find other ways to reduce the budget — not on the backs of our littlest citizens.

<http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/readers-sound-christine-quinn-child-care-schools-article-1.1068192#ixzz1tFQVQFW>

Boro Hall rally blasts mayor's plan to cut children's programs in budget



Youngsters (front row, l.-r.) Irving Estevez, Ariana Rodriguez and Bryanna Shulman rally against proposed cuts to Beacon programs, including the one they attend at MS 158 in Bayside. Photo by Christina Santucci

By Steve Mosco

April 26, 2012

Hundreds rallied on the steps of Borough Hall last Thursday as the final dismissal bell loomed for after-school programs facing budget cuts.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg's 2013 fiscal year budget calls for cuts to child care programs that would leave 47,000 children and families in the city without after-school options, according to Campaign for Children, a children's advocacy organization.

The rally drew elected officials, parents, program volunteers and children — all gathered to tell the mayor that while the cuts might save some money, it will ultimately be devastating to the children of Queens.

"These closures mean that thousands of young people will be left without the educational, enriching after-school environments that help them to succeed in school," said Campaign for Children representative Emma Woods. "Thousands of parents will be forced to scramble to find safe places for their children while they're at work."

Borough President Helen Marshall said the hours after school can be the most dangerous for school-age children and programs like the ones proposed to be cut keep children away from temptations such as drugs, alcohol and teen pregnancy.

“We are taking this message to the mayor and to the governor. Do not shut down these programs,” she said at the rally. “We’re going to win this and keep these programs open and available to the working families in Queens.”

One of the largest programs affected by the cuts would be the city’s Beacon programs, with the Queens facilities in danger of closure being Queens Community House at JHS 190 in Forest Hills, at 108-25 62nd Drive,) and the Samuel Field Y at MS 158 in Bayside, at 46-35 Oceania St. These Beacon programs operate after school, on weekends, on school holidays and throughout the summer.

“I don’t think Bloomberg understands the impact these cuts would have,” said Jessi Koenigsberg, an art teacher at MS 158 in Bayside, who works in the homework room of the school’s Beacon program. “Working parents rely on these programs. Where would children go? They would be on the streets and that is where they get into trouble.”

One of those youths who stayed off the streets thanks to his neighborhood Beacon program is Jonathan Uni, 16, a counselor in training at the Beacon program in Forest Hills.

“These programs give kids a place to play sports that’s not the streets,” said Uni, whose younger brother Michael attends a Beacon program. “The mayor says he cares about what children are doing after the school bell rings, that they shouldn’t be out on the streets. But where does he think they are going to go if the programs are cut?”

Parents feel especially slighted by the possible cuts to these programs, which many of them use because they need to work to support their families.

Jennifer Swenson, a single mother from Bayside, said there is no backup plan if she loses Beacon.

“I don’t have family in the area that can watch my sons,” said Swenson, whose two young boys, Nicolas and Malachay, attend a Beacon program. “I don’t have the resources to send them to expensive daycare and I’m not going to make them sit home alone, that’s for sure.”

And the children themselves do not want to be home alone either. Youngsters, including friends Jasmine Steele and Cameron Casalta, said after-school programs give them the chance to be with friends — without the stresses of standardized testing.

“If [Beacon] closed, I wouldn’t know what to do,” said Casalta, 11.

“How dare you, Bloomberg,” said Steele, 11. “How could you do this?”

http://www.timesledger.com/stories/2012/17/childcarerally_fh_2012_04_26_q.html



BK teachers, students, parents rally against child care cuts

April 27, 2012

BROOKLYN - Teachers, students, parents and elected officials rallied today to fight cuts to child care and after-school programs.

Those at the rally are fighting to save places like the United Community Center in East New York, which found out yesterday that it did not receive an award letter from the city. That means its after-school program is slated to close. Ralliers are demanding that Mayor Michael Bloomberg restore funding in his proposed budget. Parents say they need to work and rely on the child care and after-school programs.

The ralliers say if the cuts go through, more than 47,000 children citywide will lose the benefits of child care and after school programs.

http://www.news12.com/articleDetail.jsp?articleId=317855&position=1&news_type=news

City Cuts Funding To Nearly 200 After-School Programs

By Julie Shapiro

April 30, 2012

NEW YORK — Nearly 200 after-school programs across the city are in danger of closing for good this fall, after all of their funding was axed, officials said Monday.

Advocates have known the cuts were coming for months, but the city just notified nonprofits late last week about which programs will receive funding and which will not.

"It's disgraceful," said Lynn Appelbaum, chief program officer at the Educational Alliance, which just found out that it lost funding for three of its four programs. "It's just sad.... What's going to happen to these kids and their families?"

In all, the city slashed the number of after-school spots at elementary and middle schools from about 53,000 this year to only about 25,000 next year, the city Department of Youth and Community Development said Monday. That means that starting in September, tens of thousands of children across the five boroughs will be left with nowhere to go after school lets out.

The cuts are steepest in Manhattan, which will lose 40 of its 70 after-school programs, the city said. Brooklyn will lose nearly half of its 153 programs, The Bronx will lose 40 of its 92 programs, Queens will lose 31 of its 83 programs and Staten Island will lose six of its 19 programs, advocates said.

One of the hardest-hit neighborhoods in the city is the Lower East Side and Chinatown, where P.S. 2, P.S. 20, P.S. 124, P.S. 137, P.S. 140 and P.S. 142 will lose funding.

Nancy Maxwell, 38, said she counts on the free after-school program at P.S. 142 on Attorney Street to give her third-grade son and fourth-grade daughter something productive to do until she gets out of work.

Without the after-school program, Maxwell, a Bronx resident, doesn't see how she can keep her job as a toll collector in Connecticut, which requires a long commute.

"I'm going to have to quit my job," Maxwell said Monday. "I don't have friends or family to make sure my children get their homework done, to make sure they're safe."

Maxwell said the P.S. 142 program, run by the Educational Alliance, helped her daughter get over her fear of public speaking and helped her son get counseling for anger issues.

"It's not just a babysitting service," Maxwell said. "It's more like a family."

The five-day-a-week program gives kids a snack, helps them with their homework and then offers a range of enrichment activities, including a theater class that is putting on a musical version of "The Taming of the Shrew" in June. Previous budget cuts have already reduced the number of available spots from more than 200 several years ago to only about 135 this year, parents said.

When Maxwell heard about the latest cuts, she started searching for another after-school option — but she found that private programs would cost at least \$100 per week per child, a price that she and her husband, a train operator for New York City Transit, cannot afford.

"I don't think it's fair," Maxwell said. "The mayor promised us children first, education first. I don't feel like he's fulfilled his promises to us. What have our children done to him for him to close the doors on them?"

The Department of Youth and Community Development released a statement saying, "The City will continue to provide high-quality, comprehensive services to our students through the Out of School Time program, and we are working within our financial reality to do so."

The mayor's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

City Councilwoman Margaret Chin also slammed the city for the cuts, which she said disproportionately target Lower Manhattan. Seven out of the 10 after-school programs in her district are slated to lose their funding.

"The loss of these after-school programs will have a debilitating effect on our community and on our schools," Chin said in a statement. "Parents in Chinatown and the Lower East Side cannot afford to lose these programs, and our community cannot afford to send our children out into the streets. These cuts are irresponsible."

The city partly based the cuts on the affluence of each school's surrounding neighborhood, but programs in both low-income and high-income areas were slashed.

Nonprofit leaders said they hope the mayor will restore at least some of the after-school funding, and they encouraged concerned parents to join the Campaign for Children, which is fighting the cuts.

But Michael Zisser, CEO of University Settlement, is also thinking about what he will do if more funding does not materialize. The city cut funding to the nonprofit's programs at P.S. 63 and P.S. 137 on the Lower East Side, as well as at P.S. 219 in Bedford-Stuyvesant and P.S. 636 in Bushwick.

Zisser could begin charging for the after-school programs, but most of the children University Settlement serves wouldn't be able to pay. He also could try to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to make up for the city's cuts, but it would be difficult to find enough donors.

"There's no reasonable explanation of why the mayor would cut something so obvious," Zisser said. "When you wipe out half a system you spent years building, it just defies explanation."

Advocates and elected officials will hold a rally and town-hall meeting about the after-school cuts May 3 at 6 p.m. at P.S. 134/P.S. 137, 293 E. Broadway.

<http://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20120430/lower-east-side/city-cuts-funding-nearly-200-after-school-programs#ixzz1tZM3MfEN>

THIS IS HOW NEW YORK WORKS CAPITAL

Protesting parents call City hall, leave voicemails

By Azi Paybarah

May 1, 2012

Parents unhappy with Mayor Michael Bloomberg's reported plans to cut funds to about half of the city's public-funded childcare and after-school programs "blitzed" City Hall phones yesterday, according to one of the protest organizers.

The Campaign for Children, an advocacy group, set up an 800 number and parents who dialed had their calls steered either to Bloomberg's office or to his senior adviser, Howard Wolfson. In total, 1,364 calls were made, according to the protest organizer, Stephanie Gendell.

She also said the flood of calls temporarily forced City Hall to shut down the lines.

A spokesman for the mayor, Marc Lavorgna, said that was inaccurate and that there was nothing out of the ordinary in terms of the number of phone calls they received during the day yesterday.

"A bunch of calls came in after business hours and a voicemail filled up," he said.

Bloomberg is expected to release his executive budget on Thursday. City Council Speaker Christine Quinn [has said](#) some of the mayor's proposed cuts are "unacceptable."

<http://www.capitalnewyork.com/article/politics/2012/05/5817132/protesting-parents-call-city-hall-leave-voicemails>

Politicker

Gentile: Bloomberg Is Declaring 'All-Out War on Children'

By Colin Campbell

May 2, 2012

The typically mild-mannered Councilman Vinnie Gentile went to town on a particular cut Mayor Michael Bloomberg has proposed to the Out of School Time program in a sharply worded press release this morning, entitled with the phrase "Bloomberg is declaring war on children!"

The program, [described](#) by the city government as a free service providing "a mix of academic, recreational and cultural activities for young people (grades K-12) after school, during holidays and in the summer," would reportedly be cut in about half with the proposed budget released in February, and advocates [have been rallying since](#).

"With inconceivable cuts such as these, the Mayor is basically telling 50,000 kids to go take a hike," Mr. Gentile 'fumed' in the statement. "New York is one of the most expensive cities to live in and after-school programming and childcare is of utmost concern for most working parents. This is really just further proof that our Mayor has absolutely no concept of reality."

The Department of Youth and Community Development, meanwhile, is insisting it is just working within uncontrollable financial constraints, [releasing a statement to DNAinfo](#) saying, "The city will continue to provide high-quality, comprehensive services to our students through the Out of School Time program, and we are working within our financial reality to do so."

This isn't the first time these types of programs have been up for grabs during budget negotiations, which often involve Council Members expressing outrage and eventually successfully restoring the cuts, but Mr. Gentile's statement is particularly notable for the level of outrage expressed.

"What sort of covert logic is the Mayor using here?" he further asked. "He is cutting funding to some of the most positive youth development programs around – many of which have been replicated nationwide and credited with reducing the rate of high school drop outs!"

<http://www.politicker.com/2012/05/02/gentile-bloomberg-is-declaring-all-out-war-on-children/>



Budget Threatens Programs for City Kids

By Georgia Kral

May 2, 2012

UPDATE, May 3: Mayor Michael Bloomberg's executive budget released today does not restore the cuts to children's services first put forward in his preliminary budget.

United Neighborhood Houses called the budget "disgraceful."

"The fact that services supporting low-income communities including after-school and child care programs have failed to rise to the top of the Mayor's priority list is shameful," they said in a statement.

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn said she was "deeply concerned."

And Annabel Palma, Chair of the Council's General Welfare Committee, said the loss of child care and after-school services for approximately 47,000 children was "simply unacceptable."

"The Mayor has often sought to portray himself as a fiscal conservative who has taken an axe to wasteful spending," said Palma in a statement. "However, the reality is that the programs slated for cuts in this year's budget are programs that invest in low- and moderate-income people and serve as key tools for promoting economic growth."

It's up to the Council to now find ways to plug up holes in the budget.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg's preliminary 2013 budget calls for \$170 million in cuts to children's services, including early childhood education and after school services for the city's youth. Advocates and elected officials are not happy, and have been rallying since the proposed budget was released in February.

Funding for city subsidized childcare and after-school programs has dropped every year since 2009, according to the Campaign for Children, a coalition of more than 150 organizations fighting for kids' services. The programs serve 43,000 fewer children than they did five years ago, and if this year's budget cuts go through, that number will decline by an additional 47,000 fewer children served, according to the campaign.

In mid-April, the Campaign for Children held a rally on the steps of City Hall, and on May 1 sent a letter to Deputy Mayor Patricia Harris that was signed by 200 trustees and directors of nonprofits to argue how detrimental the cuts would be for working families.

Councilmember Lewis Fidler, D-Brooklyn, is the chairperson of the City Council's Youth Services Committee. He says the proposed budget cuts have sparked a "great deal of outrage."

"We're losing half the after-school sites from last year," said Fidler. "This is not the use of a scalpel, it's the use of a hatchet on the heads of children."

Indeed, the Department of Youth and Community Development, which administers funds for the city's after-school programs, called Out-of-School Time (OST), recently announced that there are far fewer awardees for the Request for Proposals (RFPs) to run OST. The city slashed the number of after-school spots from approximately 53,000 this year to roughly 25,000 next year. Five years ago, there were about 80,000 spots, sources said.

"The city will continue to provide high-quality, comprehensive services to our students through the Out of School Time program, and we are working within our financial reality to do so," the Department of Youth and Community Development said in a statement to *DNA Info*.

The mayor's executive budget is expected to be released later this week and must be passed by the City Council. According to Fidler, regardless of other cuts to city programs, council members will likely rally around youth services to restore funding.

"They realize the tangible affect it has on their districts," he said.

But advocates want to see Bloomberg restore the funding, and not the council, which can only restore funding for one year.

"When the mayor restores money to the budget, that can support multi-year programming," said Nancy Wackstein, executive director of the community advocacy group United Neighborhood Houses and a member of the Campaign for Children steering committee. "Parents need to know more than one year."

The awardees of an RFP for the city's EarlyLearn program, an educational child care program administered by the Administration for Children's Services, have yet to be released, which is causing concern because the number of children that will be served is unknown.

"People are describing the OST awards as a bloodbath," said Wackstein. "When the EarlyLearn awards are announced it's going to be just as serious."

A spokesperson for the Bloomberg administration told the *Huffington Post* in April that the city's Early Learn program, set to begin in September, is "generous and comprehensive."

Both EarlyLearn and OST programs help families that are less well-off than other New Yorkers, said Wackstein, who added that Bloomberg, who is invested in job creation and economic development, should in theory support them.

"These programs allow parents to work," she said.

Fidler went one step further. If kids have nowhere to go after school, parents may have to quit their jobs. "I can't believe the mayor wants that, that's stupid," he said.

Annabel Palma is the Chair of the City Council's Committee on General Welfare. In a statement, Palma denounced the cuts.

“Last year, the City Council made it a top priority to restore tens of millions of dollars for subsidized child care and after-school programs because we understood that these programs are a lifeline for working families and their children,” she said. “Unfortunately, the mayor doesn’t seem to get it and his preliminary budget, combined with the reforms laid out in the the Early Learn and OST RFPs, would once again slash child care and after-school programs for nearly 50,000 children.”

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn agrees. Last month, she called the cuts “unacceptable,” saying they’d shortchange the city’s children.

Fidler said he and other council members are prepared to “fight like hell” to restore funding.

“This is the year we draw the line in the sand,” he said.

<http://www.thirteen.org/metrofocus/news/2012/05/budget-threatens-programs-for-city-kids/>



Day Care Programs Among Expected Cuts In Mayor's New Budget

By Courtney Gross

May 2, 2012

While teacher cuts are off the table and a major corruption settlement has filled city coffers, deep cuts are expected for child care and other youth services from Mayor Michael Bloomberg's new budget. NY1's Courtney Gross filed the following report.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg is scheduled to release a nearly \$70 billion dollar budget proposal on Thursday. Teachers cuts are off the table and revenue from the tourism industry and from film and TV production are up. Tax dollars from Wall Street may be down, but a huge settlement with a CityTime contractor has filled the gap.

Even with that, Bloomberg's 11th budget proposal could still be a tough sell.

"We remain concerned, as we have been for many years, about any proposals to shutter fire companies or ladder companies or firehouses and there is also significant cuts in other youth services programs," said City Council Speaker Christine Quinn. "

The budget hasn't been as terrible as it has been these last couple of years. But some of these cuts are still going to be very detrimental to people," said City Comptroller John Liu.

While some officials may be optimistic that this year's budget may be better than years past, programs at child care centers like Brooklyn Community Service are still at risk.

"We're looking at 47,000 children citywide potentially losing access to those programs, which means those families, again, can be driven to make either difficult choices about their children or to leave the workforce, neither of which provides the economic development the administration is aiming for," said Marla Simpson of Brooklyn Community Service.

Parents potentially searching for daycare may have nowhere else to turn.

"It's very difficult to have the stress of Mayor Bloomberg having the budget cuts," said parent Shaniqua McClam. "Because you tend to worry and not being able to sleep at night. You know your kids are close to your heart and if you don't have anywhere to have them during the day you tend to worry whether you will be able to keep your job."

It is a fate that parents, children and firefighters will find out on Thursday.

http://queens.ny1.com/content/news_beats/political_news/160491/day-care-programs-among-expected-cuts-in-mayor-s-new-budget/

Bloomberg Budget Brawl: Children's Advocates Scramble To Save New York's State-Of-The-Art After-School System On Even Of Massive Cuts

By Saki Knafo

May 2, 2012

A coalition of more than 150 New York City groups, including the Children's Aid Society and the Police Athletic League, is making a last-ditch effort to save thousands of publicly funded child-care and after-school slots in the city.

The effort began more than two months ago, when Mayor Michael Bloomberg released a budget proposal that cut \$170 million for children's services.

Last week, the administration revealed that it plans to fund 224 after-school programs through 2013, meaning that 172 programs serving 25,000 children may soon be on their own. The administration has yet to make an announcement about the specific plans for early child-care programs, but advocates expect to lose around 15,900 slots for preschoolers.

The coalition, called the Campaign for Children, tried to convince the mayor to change his mind -- or to "come to his senses," as more than one critic has put it.

Members wrote letters, reached out to reporters, and rallied on the steps of City Hall. They gained support from a fairly wide array of influential figures, including Christine Quinn, the speaker of the City Council and a consistent ally of the mayor's, who called the cuts "unacceptable."

It didn't work. The mayor is set to release his executive budget Thursday, and the city's child-care advocates said they haven't heard any rumblings indicating a last-minute restoration of funds. "We're very concerned, and frankly outraged," said Katherine Eckstein, the director of public policy for the Children's Aid Society. "It's exactly the opposite of the direction the city should be going in."

If the mayor sticks to his decision, there will still be opportunities for child-care programs to gain back the lost funding. After the mayor releases his executive budget, the city council will have until the end of June to settle on next year's spending decisions. Last month, three caucuses within the city council -- those representing progressives, women, and people of color -- wrote letters to the mayor strenuously objecting to the cuts.

But advocates said they're focused on trying to keep things from getting to that point. "We're working very hard to restore this money," said Eckstein.

Samantha Levine, a spokesperson for the mayor, didn't respond to a request for comment Wednesday, but in March she explained that "economic realities have required difficult funding decisions."

Eckstein isn't convinced. "I don't have access to the city's ledger but what I do know is that we're not in the kind of dire economic situation that we were in the past couple years and that we all have to identify priorities and then fund those priorities," she said. "And I don't know what is more important than this."

There's a case to be made that child-care and after-school programs are important investments, and not just for children. The Nobel-prize winning economist James Heckman found that every dollar invested in the early child-development program Head Start pays dividends of between \$7 and \$9 as the program's alumni enter the work force and start contributing to the economy.

An evaluation of New York's after-school system in 2009 by the group Policy Studies Associates found that more than 70 percent of parents said the program made it easier to keep their jobs, and that they worked more hours because their children were in the program. Another study found that decreased worker productivity stemming from after-school issues cost businesses as much as \$300 billion a year.

Advocates also point out that after-school and child-care programs often employ low-income people who spend money in their neighborhoods, helping small businesses.

But for those who want to save these programs, the most important beneficiaries are the students. In recent years, several studies found that students enrolled in after-school programs have better school-attendance records, better test scores and grades, and are better behaved, healthier and less likely to use drugs and commit crimes than their peers.

Bloomberg, who has championed the research and those programs, established the city's current after-school system in 2005. At the time, it was the largest after-school program in the country, and according to many of the experts now fighting his cuts, the best.

Under previous administrations, the system offered little more than babysitting; participants in the 80s and 90s aren't likely to look back at those unstructured afternoons of tag and apple juice as formative experiences.

But in Bloomberg's revamped system, students get homework help and instruction from qualified teachers in various academic and extracurricular subjects. "Every day across the city there are thousands of children engaging in literacy-based projects, art, sports and fitness, a whole range of activities," said Rob Abbott, the director of a Cypress Hill after-school program fated to possibly lose its city funding.

"We have a band," he went on. "They're going to lose that."

The Children's Aid Society, an organization that dates back to the mid-19th century, has eight after-school programs on the chopping block. Eckstein said she did not know if the agency would look for other sources of funding for those programs.

Even before the mayor proposed this round of cuts, funding for the city's after-school system was declining. Between 2009 and 2012, the number of available slots dropped from 85,000 to 52,000. And the demand for those openings has been fierce.

Carina Sanz, a 24-year-old Kmart worker who is raising a 7-year-old daughter and 8-year-old nephew with her sister, said the line to enroll kids at one of the after-school programs in Cypress Hills was so long it nearly erupted into a brawl.

"That sounds bad when you listen to it," she said, "but imagine how bad things must be for people to do that."

Sanz said her daughter and nephew get help with their homework and participate in music and dance classes. "My nephew thinks he's a mini-dancer now," she said. "Which is awesome."

What's not awesome for Sanz's nephew is that the program may not be around next year. Neither Sanz nor anyone else interviewed for this story knew why the administration targeted the 172 programs, but Sanz said that if the cuts go through she'll probably end up costing the city just as much in the long run.

"I probably wouldn't be able to work all the hours I work now," she explained. To make up for the lost wages she'd apply for food stamps.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/02/bloomberg-budget-after-school-programs-child-care_n_1472589.html



Bloomberg Proposes \$68.7B Budget

May 3, 2012

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mayor Bloomberg is proposing a total city budget that exceeds \$68.7 billion this year.

Bloomberg presented his budget proposal Thursday. He has until the end of June to negotiate a final version with the City Council.

Bloomberg said that hard times for Wall Street firms are responsible for much of an unexpected shortfall. Tax revenues for next fiscal year are expected to be \$352 million lower than anticipated.

About half of the 52,000 children currently in city-sponsored after-school and early childhood programs serving low-income neighborhoods would lose their spots under the proposal.

Council Speaker Christine Quinn says restoring more than \$125 million to those programs and to child-care initiatives is a negotiating priority for her.

The mayor says he, too, is concerned about the program cuts.

<http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/Mayor-Bloomberrg-Budget-Proposal-CityTime-City-Council-149979755.html>

The New York Times

Settlement in payroll Scandal Gives Mayor's Budget a Lift

By David Chen and Kate Taylor

May 3, 2012

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg said Thursday that an infusion of almost half a billion dollars from the settlement over the CityTime payroll scandal would enable New York to fill more than 2,500 teaching positions that were to be eliminated in the budget for the coming fiscal year, while avoiding tax increases or layoffs of police officers or firefighters.

But Mr. Bloomberg said he would not budge from his plans, first outlined in February, to cut millions of dollars for child care and after-school programs, or to close 20 fire companies and cut back on financing for libraries.

The mayor's \$68.7 billion budget proposal, which is about 2 percent higher than the current budget, sets the stage for what are usually tense negotiations with the City Council to balance the city's books, as required by law, before the 2013 fiscal year starts on July 1.

"You plan on doing everything that you like to do, and then the reality brings you back, and then you do only part of what you'd like to do," Mr. Bloomberg said in a budget briefing at City Hall.

Since February, Mr. Bloomberg reported, tax revenues have increased more slowly than had been projected, while costs for social programs, including ones for the homeless, have climbed more quickly. But that additional shortfall would be plugged, he said, by a one-time-only payment of \$466 million from Science Applications International Corporation, to settle federal and city investigations into alleged fraud in the CityTime automated payroll system.

Not once, Mr. Bloomberg suggested, did he ever give serious consideration to another much-discussed idea to balance the budget: raising taxes.

"It's seductive to say, 'Oh let's tax everybody,' but if you do that you're not going to have a future," said Mr. Bloomberg, the billionaire founder of a financial services and media giant bearing his name. "Income inequality may be bad, but we still need to have companies come here, make a lot of money, and wealthy people come here and live here — that's where our tax base is."

Still, budget experts expressed concern that the 2013 budget was being closed with one-time windfalls like the CityTime settlement and the planned sale of \$1 billion worth of taxi medallions, as well as virtually the last of the \$8 billion surplus that the city accumulated during the Wall Street boom.

Charles Brecher, the consulting research director for the Citizens Budget Commission, a nonpartisan government watchdog group, said the city needed to “start to get the expenses in line with the predictable revenues, rather than postpone the pain,” before adding, “It’s just going to be harder next year.”

As was the case in his preliminary budget in February, Mr. Bloomberg’s latest proposal did not include some of the recommendations that had caused controversy in previous years. Last year, to take one example, the mayor wanted to lay off 5,400, or 5 percent, of all teachers, but a deal was reached that averted layoffs.

This time, Mr. Bloomberg announced that he had taken a preliminary proposal, to reduce the teaching work force by 2,570 through attrition, off the table. Instead, principals will now be allowed to hire additional staff, the schools chancellor, Dennis M. Walcott, said.

“New York City has lost thousands of teachers over the last few years, and it’s good news to hear that we will be adding educators to the system,” said Michael Mulgrew, president of the United Federation of Teachers. He added that he could not thank the Council and its speaker, Christine C. Quinn, enough “for making education a priority.”

Not long after Mr. Bloomberg’s event at one end of City Hall, Ms. Quinn and Councilman Domenic M. Recchia Jr., chairman of the Finance Committee, held their own news conference at the other. They said they were particularly worried about the cuts proposed to city-subsidized child care programs, and after-school offerings under the Department of Youth and Community Development’s Out-of-Time program. Advocates say that 47,000 children could lose access to those services.

“Unacceptable,” Ms. Quinn said.

In what might have been a sign of the battle ahead, a new coalition called the Campaign for Children participated in a rally on the City Hall steps shortly before Ms. Quinn and Mr. Recchia held their briefing.

Still, citing the mayor’s acknowledgment that he was also concerned about the effect of the cuts, Ms. Quinn said that such “shared concern” made her feel “optimistic.”

She expressed even more confidence that the Council would be able to come up with the money to avoid closing 20 fire companies. “New Yorkers should expect and judge this Council by what we have done, and we have not closed firehouses under my leadership as speaker,” she said.

Ms. Quinn is considered a leading potential candidate for the Democratic mayoral primary next year to succeed Mr. Bloomberg, and some of her rivals offered more barbed comments.

Bill de Blasio, the public advocate, said that “New York will pay the price for shortsighted budget decisions long after the mayor leaves office.”

And Scott M. Stringer, the Manhattan borough president, criticized the proposal as “out of touch” with working families. “We should stop this phony budget dance,” he said, “and stop treating workers as pawns in this annual charade.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/04/nyregion/bloomberg-restores-2500-teaching-jobs-in-latest-budget-proposal.html? r=2&ref=nyregion>

Bloomberg Budget: Slashed Children's Services Contribute To National Crisis, Advocates Say

By Saki Knafo

May 3, 2012

Teachers, parents and children's advocates across New York City shuddered Thursday morning as Mayor Michael Bloomberg released his executive budget: Just as they feared, the budget failed to restore \$170 million to child-care and after-school services that advocates deemed necessary to maintain the system's current capacity.

In March, when the mayor first proposed these cuts, scores of organizations around the city banded together to convince him to change his mind. A host of local politicians, including some generally dependable Bloomberg allies, like the City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, said the cuts would be unacceptable, and parents and teachers spoke out against them from the steps of City Hall.

But to no avail. "While Mayor Bloomberg's efforts to improve New York City's education system are laudable, his consistent, massive cuts to after-school programs and early-childhood education are counter to his efforts to be the education mayor," said Richard Buery, the head of the Children's Aid Society, a 150-year-old organization that serves low-income children at dozens of locations around New York.

The mayor has cut child-care and after-school programs for five straight years, leaving 90,000 children total without these programs come September, advocates said. Buery estimated that this year alone, the combined effects of the cuts and an overhaul of the child-care and after-school systems would eliminate 15,900 child-care slots and slash after-school services for 31,800 children -- "programs proven to prepare children for school, support them while in school and help low-income, working parents keep their jobs."

A statement from the group United Neighborhood Houses called the cuts "nothing short of disgraceful."

"It is a hit to not only the 47,000 children who will lose the critical educational and social support they are provided through these programs, but to their parents, who will be forced to quit their jobs to take care of their children or leave them alone after the school day ends. Thousands of jobs will be lost at non-profit agencies with the shuttering of these programs."

Samantha Levine, a spokesperson for the administration, replied that the city's early-child-care program "remains among the most generous and comprehensive." She said the changes, which will reduce the number of programs, but ostensibly improve the quality of those that survive, "will strengthen the system,

helping our youngest children develop socially and intellectually during the most important learning years of their lives.”

She did not comment on the cuts to the after-school system.

The cuts come at what advocates describe as a critical moment for low-income children around the country. Between 2000 and the start of the recession in 2008, the number of children living in poverty in America increased by 2.5 million, or 21 percent. Studies suggest that after-school and early-child-care programs can help break the cycle of poverty, but during the past 10 years, funding for these programs has plummeted.

Last month, the National Institute for Early Education Research, a research group based at Rutgers University, reported that state funding for preschool programs fell by more than \$700 per child in the last decade, to an average of \$4,151. From 2010 to 2011 alone, state funding decreased by about \$60 million, following a \$30 million cut the year before.

In response to that report, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said, "Our youngest learners will not be college and career ready if we slash preschool dollars."

Children's advocates in New York made similarly gloomy predictions Thursday. The city council has until the end of June to work out a final budget with the mayor's administration.

CORRECTION: An earlier version of the story said the administration cut \$170 million to children's services. The actual number is closer to \$70. Advocates' estimates of the funding needed to maintain the systems' current capacity accounts for the difference.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/03/bloomberg-budget-cuts-child-care-after-school-programs_n_1475333.html?ref=mostpopular

Politicker

Business Approves of Bloomberg's Budget; Would-Be Mayors Not So Much

By David Freedlander

May 3, 2012

Mayor Mike Bloomberg laid out a \$68.7 billion budget today that increases cuts overall spending while increasing education funding and not increasing taxes.

"We're able to make all of those commitments as a result of years of fiscal care, foresight and a constructive partnership with the City Council, as we began setting aside savings and reducing spending well before most other city and state governments heeded the economic storm warnings," said Mayor Bloomberg. "But they're also the result of our efforts to diversify the City's economy. In the not-so-distant past, a drop like the one we saw this year in Wall Street profits would have been a debilitating blow, but the hard work we've done to diversify our economy has done a lot to offset its effects. Our efforts in the tech, TV and film, tourism and higher education sectors are producing results, with private employment now at its highest level ever in the city, exceeding the record set back in 1969, and we expect this growth in private sector jobs to continue."

And even before Mr. Bloomberg had laid out his budget to reporters today, those you want his job starting in 2014 went on the decry it for harsh cuts to social services.

Every budget is about choices, and behind every line item are real New Yorkers with real needs. The proposed cuts in daycare and after-school programs just underscore how out of touch this budget proposal is with the daily struggles of middle class and working families. These are dollars that allow parents to go to work and pay taxes; cutting them will only force more families to seek public assistance and add to taxpayer costs.

"We should stop this phony budget dance and stop treating working families as pawns in this annual charade," said Manhattan borough president Scott Stringer. "We should continue to root out waste, fraud and abuse on outsourced contracts, and we must stop balancing the ledger on the backs of New York City's working families."

John Liu, who had his own private briefing with Mayor Bloomberg this morning, called attention to the agreements with outside contractors and suggested Mayor Bloomberg seek to cut waste from the government.

"In this challenging economic environment one of the best ways to maintain critical

services for New Yorkers like daycare, fire protection, and libraries is to strengthen our fight against the waste of taxpayer funds and wasted subsidies to large corporations."

Public Advocate Bill de Blasio says that the budget will backfire in the longrun.

"New York will pay the price for shortsighted budget decisions long after the Mayor leaves office," he said. "The disinvestment in childcare and after-school programs proposed by Mayor Bloomberg will hurt thousands of working families. For 47,000 vulnerable children, these cuts mean lost opportunities and a longer, harder road to the middle class. We know these programs work, and we know the social and economic costs of cutting them.

Every dollar we invest in early education saves \$13 in the long-run. The Mayor is handing down a hefty bill that will come due in future budgets and future generations. After four years of deep cuts, we simply cannot allow any further eroding of our City's early childhood education system."

And Council Speaker Christine Quinn too says she has concerns about the budget, but she mixes in high praise for the mayor's approach.

I am pleased to see that despite the halting economic recovery, the Executive Budget addresses several important Council priorities raised in our response to the Preliminary Budget. Specifically, we saved nearly 2,600 classroom teachers, and I am thrilled that the Department of Education has been funded at a level that avoids any further reduction in teachers. This response to our call keeps school budgets whole and prevents classroom sizes from rising further, which is a critical priority that we are happy to see is shared by the Administration and reflected in the Executive Budget.

"However, I am deeply concerned about cuts to childcare programs. Two major programs, EarlyLearn and Out-of-School Time (OST), have suffered unacceptable cuts and are being implemented in ways that create tremendous disruptions for families, communities, and providers. The EarlyLearn program, as presently funded in this Executive Budget, reduces overall childcare capacity by 8,200 seats and cuts funding to areas of the City with significant high-needs populations. Many working families will no longer have access to low-cost, quality childcare.

The Executive Budget also leaves 20 fire companies on the chopping block, needlessly endangering our city's public safety.

"Let me be clear – although I am grateful for the progress we've seen in the Mayor's Executive Budget, I still have deep concerns about how the remaining cuts will impact the lives of working New Yorkers and their families.

"As we always have, the Council will work in the coming weeks to ensure the adoption of a budget for fiscal year 2013 that protects the most vulnerable, ensures public safety, and provides all of our citizens with the kind of City in which they can flourish."

But Kathy Wylde, president of the Partnership for New York City, approves of the budget and wants Mayor Bloomberg and Gov. Andrew Cuomo to continue to push for mandate relief.

"Continued fiscal restraint by the City has allowed for expanded investment in our public school system, without raising taxes, but more can be done if mandate reform is made a top priority," she said. "State and federal mandates continue to eat up resources that the City needs to maintain essential services. Reducing some of the City's non-discretionary costs would make additional expansions of public services possible. Governor Cuomo and Mayor Bloomberg's efforts to pursue mandate relief are vital to relieving some of the fiscal burden on the City and allow for further investment in vital City services like education."

The budget reduces city controllable expenditures by \$110 million while adding \$300 million in education spending, money that will only be realized in the City and the United Federation of Teachers agree on a teacher evaluation system that meets State and federal requirements. The budget also increases the five year capital plan by \$800 million.

<http://www.politicker.com/2012/05/03/business-approves-of-bloombergs-budget-would-be-mayors-not-so-much/>



Mayor Proposes \$68.7B Budget

By Bob Hennelly and Brigid Bergin

May 3, 2012

Mayor Michael Bloomberg proposed Thursday a total city budget that exceeds \$68.7 billion this year — restoring 2,500 teaching slots but cutting childcare and after-school programs and shuttering firehouses.

The mayor blamed a drop in Wall Street profits for a \$352 million shortfall in revenue projections. He said Thursday that the \$466 million settlement for the federal CityTime lawsuit would be applied to help make up for the decrease in tax revenue.

"The slow pace of national economic recovery and the uncertainties in the global economy have produced challenges in balancing next year's budget and presents challenges in the future we cannot ignore," Bloomberg said.

Education

The budget relies on \$300 million in federal and state aid for city schools. But the aid is contingent on the United Federation of Teachers reaching an agreement on a teacher evaluation system by January.

UFT President Michael Mulgrew objected to how the mayor characterized the \$300 million when he said the UFT "needs to agree" to a teacher evaluation system by January to receive that money.

"It's an agreement on both parties behalf," he said. "It's not the UFT needs to agree, we both need to agree."

Mulgrew said the teachers union wants an evaluation system that will help develop better teachers, and said the administration already left more than \$70 million of federal aid on the table by refusing to negotiate a 33-school pilot program of the new evaluation system.

He did have high praise for the 2,500 new teaching positions that replace those lost through attrition in the past two years. But he was careful to direct his gratitude to the City Council, who he said fought to restore those positions which were cut in the mayor's preliminary budget in February.

Childcare Takes a Hit

After school programs and childcare cuts continued to take a hit in the mayor's revised budget. If funding is not restored, nearly 50,000 slots for kids will be lost, child advocates said. The Mayor's office countered that the number of slots lost will be just above 41,500.

Soledad Hiciano, executive director of the Community Association of Progressive Dominicans, joined dozens of others on the steps of city hall following the budget address to protest the reduction. "The majority of the people that you see up here today will not have a job come September. That also adds up," Hiciano said. The City Council could still save some of these programs but advocates say restorations are rarely 100 percent. In 2009, advocates say there were more than 137,000 childcare and after school slots in the city. This year, the number is just over 94,000.

Firehouses in the Cross-Hairs

The budget also calls for the closure of 20 firehouses that were identified last year but saved from the chopping block by a budget deal. "If we have 20 less fire companies, response times will increase around the city and operations will be effected throughout the city," Fire Commissioner Sal Cassano told reporters. But he insisted the cuts could be made in a way to minimize the impacts. Cassano said the biggest budget hurdle for his agency's overtime. Due to a protracted court battle over the FDNY's hiring practices, the department has not hired a new firefighter since 2008. As a result, the Department is down 475 firefighters and spending \$41 million in overtime annually.

Bloomberg said that fire deaths are at the lowest they've been since the city started keeping track in 1916. But Steve Cassidy, head of the United Firefighters Union, said the city's firefighters are busier than ever responding to fire and medical emergencies. "I believe real public safety is not a luxury," said Cassidy, "it's a necessity." In a statement, Council Speaker Christine Quinn said the Council will work in the coming weeks to achieve a budget, "that protects the most vulnerable, ensures public safety, and provides all of our citizens with the kind of City in which they can flourish."

City Council Finance Chairman Domenic Recchia, who is opposed to the firehouse closures, vowed to push for the release of a report on the city's 911 call system redesign that the fire unions believe will show higher fire response times than the administration has previously circulated.

A Plan That Hinges on Unknowns

The budget also hinged on the sale of \$1 billion in new taxi medallions, an endeavor complicated by city comptroller John Liu's vow to block the contract for the so-called Taxi of Tomorrow and two pending lawsuits. "If we don't get the \$1 billion, we're going to have to cut services dramatically," Bloomberg said. The mayor painted the picture of the city's economy as more reliant than the nation's, and said it has regained 180 percent of private sector jobs lost during the recession. The nation has only reclaimed 40 percent. Disappointing financial sector tax revenues were offset by robust numbers from the city's tourism, film-TV production, tech and higher education sectors.

<http://www.wnyc.org/blogs/wnyc-news-blog/2012/may/03/mayor-present-executive-budget-shows-city-revenue-not-growing-predicted/>

Bloomberg's Proposed Budget Slash Would Hurt Kids

By Tina Moore, Reuven Blau and Rachel Monahan

May 3, 2012

[MAYOR BLOOMBERG](#) released his \$68.7 billion 2013 executive budget Thursday — threatening to slash more than 42,000 slots from child-care and after-school programs for kids.

“Many working families, if these cuts go through, would no longer have access to low-cost child care for their children,” City Council Speaker Quinn said of the city’s Early Learn and Out of School Time programs.

Bloomberg, who presented his proposal to a packed room of city officials and news media, suggested that he would work with the Council to restore some funding.

“Sure, I’m concerned,” Hizzoner said when asked about cutting services for needy children. “You’ll have to wait and see what we do.”

He has until June 30 to hammer out a final budget with the City Council.

“The city cannot do everything for everybody,” he added. “The objective is to try to balance and make choices.”

Quinn, who hopes to follow Bloomberg as mayor, crowed about the preservation of 2,500 teaching jobs — or \$185 million in the executive budget.

“This response to our call keeps school budgets whole and prevents classroom sizes from rising further,” Quinn said.

It was the first time since 2008 the budget didn’t slash teachers. There are 74,714 in the city, down from 79,109 in 2008.

But Bloomberg warned the United Federation of Teachers that it would cost the city \$300 million in state aid if the union fails to reach a deal on evaluations by January.

Bloomberg defended the possible closure of 20 fire companies and insisted response times wouldn’t increase. “We have the lowest number of deaths by fire ever in the history of the city since we started keeping numbers,” he said.

And he balked at criticism from City Council members.

“They weren’t elected to run the city and, you know, there’s nothing wrong with them having those views.”

Aside from the agency cuts, Bloomberg’s budget relies on increased revenue through fees and fines and several one-shot deals to plug a \$495 million shortfall.

Bloomberg’s proposal uses \$2 billion from the Retiree Health Benefits Trust Fund in 2013 and 2014. His plan also relies on about a half-billion dollars recouped in the CityTime scandal and \$1 billion from outer-borough taxi medallion sales, a plan that is threatened by lawsuits.

“If we don’t get the billion dollars, we’re going to have to cut services in the city dramatically,” Bloomberg warned.

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/bloomberg-proposed-budget-slash-hurt-kids-article-1.1072356#ixzz1tugO20PP>



Mayor Cites Strong Private Sector In Executive Budget Address

By Courtney Gross

May 3, 2012

Mayor Bloomberg on Thursday lauded the strength of the city's private sector as he delivered his \$70 billion executive budget proposal which does not raise taxes but also projects continued gaps for several years to come.

Despite the recession, the mayor says the number of private sector jobs breaks the record set in 1969. However, the spending plan shows a nearly half-billion dollar budget gap for fiscal year 2013.

While tax revenues are lower than expected from losses on Wall Street, Bloomberg says the city is using increased revenues in tourism, film and the TV industry to offset the losses.

"We can't do everything we want in the size and frequency that you would like, but the objective is to try to balance and make choices and we will try to do that and do it responsibly like we've been doing for 10 years," Bloomberg said.

The mayor's 2013 spending plan also does not call for any teacher layoffs or cuts to the city's police department.

However, Bloomberg wants to shutter 20 fire companies and slash more than 30,000 slots for day care and after-school programs for children.

The City Council is planning to fight those cuts.

"I still have grave concerns over how the remaining proposed cuts will impact working New Yorkers and their families," said City Council Speaker Christine Quinn.

When asked about the criticism from some council members, the mayor responded, "I don't much care what he said if you really want to know. I think you're wasting everybody's time. Why would I care?"

But even those in the administration said the proposed cuts could make waves. "Right now we have the best fire protection that we can. If we have to reduce them in the areas that we have to reduce them, it certainly will have an impact. But we'll pick the areas that have the least effect," said Fire Commissioner Salvatore Cassano.

Even worse, some revenue the city is relying on may not come in at all.

Bloomberg's plan assumes \$300 million in state aid for education, but hinges on whether or not the city can strike a deal with the teacher's union on teacher evaluations by next January.

"We continue to talk on a variety of issues and I am always confident that we will come up with a deal by January," said Schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott.

A billion dollars from the sale of taxi medallions as part of a plan to bring service to all five boroughs is also at risk, as the plan is tied up in court.

"If a judge holds you up, then we start laying off people," the mayor said.

Bloomberg said the city still faces budget gaps of roughly \$3 billion in fiscal year 2014, \$3.7 billion in 2015 and \$3.2 billion in 2016.

The mayor now has until the end of June to negotiate a final version of the 2013 budget with the City Council.

Watch the video here: http://www.ny1.com/content/top_stories/160501/mayor-cites-strong-private-sector-in-executive-budget-address

Mayor holds firm on budget cuts to child care, fire companies

By Alexander Hotz

May 3, 2012

Mayor Michael Bloomberg presented his 2013 executive budget Thursday, which still includes the controversial closure of 20 fire companies and the elimination of approximately 47,000 child care and after school slots.

The administration did, however, set aside additional funding for education. In his February preliminary budget, Bloomberg had asked for the elimination of 2,500 teaching positions.

The Mayor said this year's \$68.7 billion budget, which he unveiled at City Hall, was especially challenging because of lower Wall Street profits. Tax revenues are down \$352 million this year largely because of the financial sector, Bloomberg said. Although revenues from the technology, film and television and tourism sectors were up, those funds are not enough to offset Wall Street's losses.

Bloomberg made sure to tout the city's job growth, which is outpacing the national average. Only 40 percent of the jobs lost nationally during the recession have been replaced, while New York has regained 180 percent of the jobs it lost. "Private employment is at a record in New York City," said Bloomberg. "We haven't seen these numbers since 1969."

Shortly after the Mayor released his budget, critics were quick to attack the administration for not doing more to support early childcare programs. Under the Mayor's proposed budget, \$170 million would be cut from the Department of Youth and Community Development and Administration for Children's Services. According to the city's own numbers, services for 47,000 children — 6,000 childcare slots and 31,000 after school slots — would be eliminated. Most of these children come from low-income working families.

Public Advocate and prospective mayoral candidate Bill deBlasio was one of the first to pounce, with a statement that "the Mayor is handing down a hefty bill that will come due in future budgets and future generations."

Children's advocates, joined by council members Ydanis Rodriguez and Robert Jackson, gathered on the steps of City Hall shortly after the Mayor's press conference and said they would continue to fight to restore child care funding. The mayor must negotiate a final version of the budget with the City Council by June.

"It's great that the mayor put money back in for education," said Katherine Eckstein, director of public policy at The Children's Aid Society. "But you can't then simultaneously undermine the investments in education by cutting the very programs that prepare children for school — early childhood programs."

United Neighborhood Houses had harsher words for the Mayor. In a statement the organization called the administration's failure to fund childcare and after-school programs "disgraceful." Half of its member organizations' Out of School Time programs would be closed, leaving about 6,000 children without childcare if the Mayor's budget was approved, it said.

This year's executive budget was cobbled together with the help of two high-stakes bets and an unexpected windfall. Crucial to education funding this year is a yet-to-be-brokered deal between the United Federation of Teachers and the Bloomberg administration. Included in Bloomberg's education budget is \$300 million from the federal government, but the city can only get that aid if it can cooperate with the union to implement a new teacher evaluation system. The city has until January 2013 to reach an agreement; otherwise amendments to the education budget will be necessary to compensate for the loss of funding.

Another gamble is the planned July sale of \$1 billion in new taxi medallions. This important revenue source could be held up by two ongoing [lawsuits](#). At the press conference the mayor made clear that he was counting on the city's head lawyer to prevail. "Michael Cardozo better win," Mayor Bloomberg quipped.

The city also got lucky. To help plug this year's almost \$500 million budget gap, the administration is using \$466 million it won in a settlement from Science Applications Intentional Corporation, the company behind the City Time contract scandal.

But barring another City Time surprise, Bloomberg acknowledged that 2014 would "really be a challenge." This year the city will deplete its Retiree Health benefit Trust Fund, a nest egg it has raided for years to fill its budget gap. Going forward the mayor predicted that the city would have to tighten its belt even more with future cost-cutting programs. In 2013, the so-called Programs to Eliminate the Gap resulted in annual savings of over \$6 billion.

"If we don't get the billions we need we will have to cut services dramatically," Bloomberg said.

<http://www.thenewyorkworld.com/2012/05/03/mayor-holds-firm-on-budget-cuts-to-child-care-fire-companies/>



NYC's \$68.7 Billion Budget Retains Teachers, Bloomberg Says

By Henry Goldman

May 3, 2012

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg today presented a revised \$68.7 billion budget that contains no new taxes and accepts a City Council call to retain more than 2,000 teaching positions that he previously sought to eliminate.

The 2013 spending plan still contains about \$170 million in cuts to day care, summer camp and after-school programs affecting about 52,000 children. City Council Speaker Christine Quinn said she will oppose the reductions. The budget requires council approval by June 30, the end of the city's fiscal year. Council members also object to Bloomberg's proposal to save \$43 million by closing 20 fire companies, she said.

The mayor, an independent, told reporters that he expected those and other issues to be resolved through negotiations. He said he agreed with Quinn, a Democrat, about the importance of day care and other youth programs. He expressed less agreement about the fire companies, citing data showing the fewest city fire deaths since such statistics have been kept.

"When we can afford it, we can provide more services," Bloomberg, 70, said at City Hall. He predicted a 2014 deficit of \$3 billion, and a \$3.7 billion gap in 2015. "We are going to face some significant challenges going into 2014," he said.

The financial plan reflected \$352 million less in tax revenue, primarily from Wall Street, and \$143 million more in expenses than the mayor anticipated in his preliminary financial plan released in February. The total size of the budget, which is up from \$66 billion last year, remained the same.

CityTime Settlement

Most of the \$495 million gap may be closed with \$466 million from a March legal settlement with Science Applications International Corp. over alleged fraud in installing CityTime, a payroll-management system, he said.

Charles Brecher, research director for the Citizens Budget Commission, a business-funded fiscal watchdog, said his group was concerned that the budget relied on "one-shot" revenue generators such as the CityTime settlement, a \$1 billion sale of taxi medallions and about \$2 billion over the next two years from a trust fund to pay future retirees' health benefits.

Kathryn Wylde, president of the Partnership for New York City, an association of corporate chief executives, praised the spending plan, saying it showed "continued fiscal restraint by the city," allowing for "expanded investment in our public- school system without raising taxes."

Tourism, Higher Education

Debt service is among the fastest-growing nonagency expenses, increasing to \$7.2 billion in 2016 from \$4.8 billion in 2011, according to the budget documents.

Growth in tourism, film and television production, higher- education hiring and technology businesses offset decreases in tax revenue from the financial industry, the mayor's office said yesterday.

The city has regained all the jobs lost since the 2008 financial crisis, eclipsing its record employment level set in 1969, Bloomberg said. By comparison, the U.S. has recaptured about 40 percent of the jobs lost since then, he said.

Most of the increase has come in industries such as tourism and retail that don't pay as well as finance, resulting in less growth in total personal income, the mayor said.

In abandoning his February plan to eliminate teachers through attrition, Bloomberg satisfied a demand from Quinn, who yesterday estimated that 1,800 positions would be affected. Today, she put the total at 2,600.

"This keeps school budgets whole and prevents classroom sizes from rising further," said Quinn, 45, who is considered a candidate for mayor next year. "I am deeply concerned about cuts to childcare programs."

The mayor, whose term ends in 2013, is the founder and majority owner of Bloomberg News parent Bloomberg LP.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-05-03/nyc-s-bloomberg-says-68-7-billion-budget-will-retain-teachers.html>



Mayor Releases New Budget With Childcare Cuts, Gets Very Annoyed at Reporters

By Sam Levin

May 3, 2012

Mayor Mike Bloomberg released his \$68.7 billion executive budget proposal today and patted himself on the back for leading the city in a speedy recovery that's better than the rest of the country. The new budget for 2013 has no tax increases and relies on \$6.2 billion in savings generated through deficit closing actions his city agencies have taken since 2007, the mayor reported today at City Hall.

He began his presentation by telling reporters that the city's job growth has improved faster than the rest of the country, thanks to the diverse economy he has supported and the many successful industries that are attracting folks to New York.

Of note, the mayor's budget increases city funding for education from \$13.3 billion in 2012 to \$13.6 billion in 2013, which will up the total number of teachers in the school system and maintain overall funding levels -- a part of the budget that the City Council and its speaker are applauding.

The Council -- and a crowd of angry advocates gathered on the steps of City Hall -- is not, however, happy about cuts to childcare and after-school programs, which will likely be a key part of the final budget negotiations over the next two months.

When questioned about this and other gripes from City Council members, Bloomberg got unusually testy today (watch the video at around 1:00:37).

One reporter from the *Wall Street Journal* asked the mayor for a response to some Council members' complaints that the mayor's priorities with social services are unfair and began his question citing the concern of a specific (unnamed -- thanks to an interruption from the mayor) Council member.

Before the reporter could bring up the specific complaint, the mayor interrupted: "I don't much care what he said, if you really want to know. I think you're wasting everybody's time. Why would I care? He has a right to say -- I'll defend his First Amendment right to say what he wants. He can go on to the steps of City Hall...and you'll probably even write it. I don't know why you'd bother to, but if you want to, go ahead."

The reporter said: "I'm curious as to what your response is..."

"You're always curious," the mayor interjected. "I don't have a response to it."

Bloomberg didn't stop there. "I don't have to have a response to everything! People have a right to say what they want and express their views. There's nothing wrong with that. They weren't elected to run the city. And, you know, there's nothing wrong with them having those views."

"Anything else?" he said, moving on to the next question.

While this back-and-forth exchange is not really *that* crucial to the budget news today -- and is not that unique -- it's worth including here for a couple of reasons. First of all, the mayor seemed unusually dismissive of the reporter's fairly legitimate and rather uncontroversial question. But secondly, his somewhat insulting comments toward the City Council come only a few days after City Council Speaker Christine Quinn -- who has been struggling to distance herself from the mayor as she prepares to run for his job -- stormed out of a living wage press conference after someone insulted the mayor, calling him a "pharaoh." She said on Monday that she was standing up against name-calling, but her actions seemed to signify her larger struggle to support living wage legislation, which the mayor staunchly opposes. Either way, it's a bit ironic that Bloomberg would come down kind of hard on the Council with that sort of language, days after the Speaker spoke out against uncivil rhetoric.

When reporters asked the Speaker about Bloomberg's comments today at a separate press conference an hour later, Quinn said that the City Council has in fact played a very important role in the process.

"I don't know what Council member was being spoken of, but look, we put out -- we, being the Council, all 51 members -- conducted hearings on the mayor's preliminary budget," she told reporters at City Hall. "We put out a budget response in which we articulated...a number of high priority things we were concerned about. One of the highest priorities was the potential loss of 2,600 teachers, due to attrition. That has been fully addressed in the budget...You cannot argue that the mayor heard the Council and responded to one of our top priorities...The proof is in the pudding. Our top priority from our response has been fully addressed in the budget, for which we are grateful."

Anyway, that aside, let's review a few other issues of substance in the budget worth noting.

The budget is dependent on \$300 million for education that will only reach the school system if the city and the United Federation of Teachers can come to an agreement on teacher evaluations before 2013, the mayor said, adding that he hopes the union will actually be willing to reach an agreement and not risk the funding (the UFT, in its post-budget statement, thanked the City Council for helping save thousands of teachers, but took a shot at Bloomberg for walking away from negotiations in the past).

As for the childcare funding, critics claim that cuts to two major programs -- EarlyLearn and Out-of-School Time -- would reduce overall child care capacity by 8,200 seats and especially hurt high-needs populations in the city.

An advocacy group called the Campaign for Children rallied today and sent out an angry statement, noting that the \$170 million cuts to these programs fails to recognize the importance of these services to children and families. They are calling on the mayor and the Council to fully restore the funding in the final budget, which has to be approved by June 30th.

Quinn, in her press conference after the mayor's presentation, said that this was a priority for the Council -- calling the cuts unacceptable, but adding that she's optimistic that they will be restored through negotiations.

"Many working families, if these cuts go through, would no longer have access to low-cost quality childcare for their children," Quinn said.

A large group of elected officials from northern Manhattan also sent out a statement criticizing the after-school cuts.

(Also unhappy with the childcare and after-school cuts, as per emails that arrived in our inbox this afternoon: Public Advocate Bill de Blasio, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, both mayoral hopefuls, and several other City Council members. Comptroller John Liu, another mayoral hopeful, sent out a statement saying that the city needs to "strengthen our fight against the waste of taxpayer funds and wasted subsidies to large corporations").

Another concern of critics is a proposal to close 20 fire companies, which the Council hopes to remove from the chopping block. When questioned about public safety matters at his press conference, Bloomberg repeatedly said that the city is safer than it's ever been and that he will continue to keep the city safe and do it in an economically-efficient way.

Speaking of the childcare cuts, City Councilman Robert Jackson, chair of the Education Committee, spoke after Quinn, acknowledging that this is the typical back-and-forth of negotiations.

"People say, 'Well, why do we have to go through this dance?'" he said. "Well, if we have to dance in order...to reach an agreement, then we will dance."

http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninscared/2012/05/mayor_releases.php

GOTHAM SCHOOLS

Mayor's budget keeps after-school cuts, counts on teacher evals

By Phillissa Cramer and Rachel Cromidas

May 3, 2012

The city would spend \$387 million more on its schools next year and hire more teachers under the budget proposal Mayor Bloomberg unveiled today.

But it would also slash spending to after-school programs, leaving 27,000 children who currently attend city-funded programs without care.

"I'm concerned," Bloomberg said about the after-school cuts during a press conference about the budget today at City Hall. He said the programs are "extremely valuable" for working families but had unfortunately fallen victim to scarce resources. "We cannot do everything for everybody," he said.

Advocates from Upper Manhattan gathered on the steps of City Hall in protest right after Bloomberg's presentation, and critics of the mayor's budget said the child-care cuts would prove short-sighted.

"These are dollars that allow parents to go to work and pay taxes; cutting them will only force more families to seek public assistance and add to taxpayer costs," said Manhattan Borough President and mayoral candidate Scott Stringer in a statement.

But both the mayor and City Council Speaker Christine Quinn signaled that the toll could be lessened by the time a final budget is set by July 1.

At a press conference shortly after Bloomberg's presentation, Quinn said reversing the child-care cuts would be her top priority during the next two months of budget negotiations. Last year, the budget negotiation process ended with some restorations for child care and, at the last moment, averted thousands of teacher layoffs that Bloomberg had threatened.

"If there is an openness to negotiations then I'm very optimistic," Quinn said about the opportunity to shift more funds to after-school programs. Reversing the cuts would be a political win for each City Council member and especially for Quinn, who is seen as Bloomberg's choice to succeed him.

Robert Jackson, the council's education committee chair, vowed to turn back the cuts, which would eliminate thousands of child-care slots in his Northern Manhattan district. "If we have to dance to come to the end and reach an agreement, we will dance," he said.

Quinn and other members of the council took credit for one change that happened between Bloomberg's preliminary budget proposal and now. As Chancellor Dennis Walcott had promised and City Council sources indicated on Wednesday, the city is not calling for any reduction in the size of the Department of Education's teaching corps. Instead, Bloomberg said today, it would actually add teaching positions for the first time after years of budget cuts.

Last year, the city lost 1,800 teaching jobs to attrition. Bloomberg said today the city would replace all teachers who leave and also likely add positions, for a total of 2,500 new hires.

The mayor's preliminary budget, released in February, had also called for a \$30 million cut in funds for overtime payments to Department of Education employees. That cut was eliminated, and a Department of Education spokesman, Matthew Mittenenthal, said principals could opt to pay for after-school programs of their own using the "per session" funds.

United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew gave the budget a positive review but did not address the after-school cuts. "New York City has lost thousands of teachers over the last few years and it's good news to hear that we will be adding educators to the system," he said. "I can't thank the City Council enough for making education a priority."

But Mulgrew chided Bloomberg for saying during his press conference that he hoped the union would engage in "serious discussions" around new teacher evaluations, noting that the city, not the union, had walked out of talks in December.

"There's no substantive reason why a final agreement should not be reached very quickly," Bloomberg had said. "The longer the UFT waits, however, the longer it will take our schools to get the money they need and that they deserve."

That's because Gov. Andrew Cuomo has pledged to attach next year's increases in school aid to teacher evaluation agreements: Districts that don't finalize new evaluations by January 2013 won't see their state aid grow. Not meeting the deadline could force the city to forgo \$300 million for the year — nearly the same amount by which the DOE's budget is slated to grow — and make deep midyear cuts to the Department of Education.

<http://gothamschools.org/2012/05/03/mayors-budget-keeps-after-school-cuts-counts-on-teacher-evals/>



The Call Blog: Bloomberg Budget: No Tax Hikes, But FDNY & Child Care On Chopping Block

By NY1 News

May 3, 2012

Not surprisingly, most of our viewers were not so happy with Mayor Bloomberg's budget proposal. An overwhelming 73% said the City Council should not approve it. Many of our callers say losing these after-school programs may mean having to give up their jobs. More of your thoughts below.

Mayor Bloomberg presented his \$68.7 billion budget plan for Fiscal Year 2013 at City Hall today. It includes no tax hikes, and an increase in education spending from \$13.3 to \$13.6 billion. Bloomberg also said New York City regained 180% of the private sector jobs it lost during the recession.

The Mayor also outlined several cuts to balance the budget. He plans to slash more than 30,000 slots for daycare and after-school programs for kids. And Bloomberg wants to shutter 20 fire companies. New York City will still face a budget gap of approximately \$3 billion in 2014. The plan still needs approval after negotiations with the City Council. What would you do?

What's your reaction to Mayor Bloomberg's proposal that balances the budget with no tax increases? Do you support closing fire companies and cutting child care slots if funding for education is increased? How would you describe Bloomberg's handling of City finances the last ten years?

http://www.ny1.com/content/the_call/the_call_blog/160540/the-call-blog--bloomberg-budget--no-tax-hikes--but-fdny---child-care-on-chopping-block

CityTime Settlement Cannot Fill NYC Budget Revenue Gap

May 3, 2012

Mayor Bloomberg revealed his executive budget proposal on Thursday with disappointing news that the city's revenue projects, primarily in the financial sector, are not working as well as initially hoped for and have produced an unexpected gap.

Despite the colossal \$466 million CityTime fraud settlement the city was hoping to relieve the city's financial woes, Bloomberg announced the recovered funds were "already baked" into the budget, leaving the city with a projected \$3 billion gap.

The disconcerting news comes as children advocacy groups around the city have slammed the mayor for his plans to cut \$170 million in children services funding, specifically the school system's state-of-the-art after school programs, which Council Speaker Christine Quinn has criticized as "unacceptable."

Councilman James Vacca recently came out condemning the threatened cuts saying, "I believe that after-school programs and child care programs are not luxuries, they're necessities."

SAIC's connection to the epic CityTime scandal, which involved fraud from hundreds of contractors, kickbacks, and money-laundering schemes, resulted in the agreement to pay \$370 million in restitution and \$130 in penalty fines.

Watch the video here: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/03/citytime-settlement-cannot-fill-revenue-gap-nyc-budget_n_1474504.html



NYC mayor proposes \$68.7 billion budget

May 3, 2012

ASSOCIATED

NEW YORK — New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg is proposing a \$68.7 billion city budget that avoids a drop in the number of city teachers while cutting back on city-sponsored child care and other services.

Bloomberg presented his budget proposal Thursday and has two months to negotiate a final version with the City Council.

Bloomberg says hard times for Wall Street firms are responsible for much of an unexpected shortfall that he would plug with a \$466 million settlement.

About half the 52,000 children in city-sponsored after-school programs serving low-income neighborhoods would lose their spots under the proposal. Council Speaker Christine Quinn says restoring more than \$125 million to those programs and to child-care initiatives is a negotiating priority for her.

The mayor says he, too, is concerned about the program cuts.

[http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-505245_162-57427392/nyc-mayor-proposes-\\$68.7-billion-budget/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-505245_162-57427392/nyc-mayor-proposes-$68.7-billion-budget/)

THIS IS HOW NEW YORK WORKS CAPITAL

Bloomberg presents a balanced budget, with moving parts

By Dana Rubinstein

May 3, 2012

Mayor Michael Bloomberg this afternoon presented a balanced executive budget for the 2013 fiscal year that includes no new taxes, but which includes cuts for social services and relies on at least two funding sources that must still be considered aspirational.

Falling tax revenues rooted in a dramatic drop in Wall Street profits created a \$352 million gap in the budget, which the mayor closed using money the city got back in a settlement related to the CityTime scandal. Tax receipts from growing local industries like film and television, tourism and the tech sector increased, according to the mayor.

His \$68.7 billion budget proposal increases funding for education from \$13.3 billion in this fiscal year to \$13.6 billion next, which will allow the city to hire more teachers. But that increase is contingent on \$300 million in state and federal funding that the city will receive if it comes to an agreement with the teachers union on performance-based teacher evaluations. That agreement has yet to be reached.

"There's no substantive reason why a final agreement should not be reached very quickly," said the mayor. "The longer the U.F.T. waits, however, the longer it will take our schools to get the money they need and that they deserve."

The budget also relies on a projected \$1 billion from the sale of 2,000 new yellow taxi medallions. But those taxi medallions are tied to an Albany agreement on outer-borough taxis, which is now in litigation.

"If we don't get the \$1 billion, we 're going to have to cut services in the city dramatically, there's no other alternative," Bloomberg said.

"And if a judge holds you up, then we start laying off people," he added.

Bloomberg said that city-controlled budgetary costs decreased by \$110 million this year, but that costs outside of his control, like pension payments, Medicaid, and debt service, increased by \$1.9 billion, or 7.2 percent.

The mayor closed this year's budget using \$6.2 billion set aside from the boom years, and from 11 rounds of cost-cutting since 2007. A deficit of \$3 billion is projected for fiscal year 2014.

Advocates say the budget includes some \$170 million in cuts to afterschool programs and child care, as well as the elimination of 20 fire companies.

Both before and after the mayor's budget address, councilmembers protested his proposed cuts to afterschool programs and firehouses.

"So, 31 afterschool programs in the Bronx we'll lose," said Brooklyn councilwoman Letitia James, before the mayor's address. "Seventy-two programs in Brooklyn we will lose, 34 programs in Manhattan, 29 programs in Queens, and six in Staten Island."

The mayor, anticipating such criticism, said, during his remarks, "Keep in mind those reductions are against levels of service that our administration raised to historic highs during a better economic time."

In the question-and-answer portion of the budget address, the mayor strongly implied that both the firehouse and social-service cuts would be subject to change.

"Well, number one, we work with the City Council between now and June 30, so we'll see how all of that works out," said Bloomberg, referring to the social-service cuts.

Referring to firehouses, he said, "We'll see how the budget comes out between now and June 30. But let me point out, we have the lowest number of deaths by fire ever in the history of the city since we started keeping numbers ...[in] 1916."

In other news, the mayor said New York City had regained 180 percent of the private-sector jobs lost since the depths of the recession, compared to a nationwide rate of 40 percent. The unemployment rate, however, has also risen, something Bloomberg attributed to more people getting back into the job market and looking for employment.

"That said, the slow pace of the national economic recovery and the uncertainties in the global economy have produced challenges in balancing next year's budget and presents challenges in the future that we cannot ignore," he said.

Asked about criticism from councilmembers about his budget cuts, the mayor got testy.

"I don't have a response to it," he said. "I don't have to have a response to everything. People have a right to say what they want and express their views. There's nothing wrong with that. They weren't elected to run the city."

He also had some criticism about how the federal government was handling the economy.

"In the end, we balance our budget," he said. "The federal government does not. The federal government prints money. The European countries did that. And eventually it catches up with you, this year, next year, nobody really knows when it's gonna happen."

<http://www.capitalnewyork.com/article/politics/2012/05/5832308/bloomberg-presents-balanced-budget-moving-parts>



Mayor Michael Bloomberg Unveils 2013 Budget Proposal

May 3, 2012

NEW YORK – Mayor Michael Bloomberg presented a new budget Thursday that has some good news and some bad news.

Most New York City taxpayers will be cheering the \$68.7 billion budget because although it has some revenue shortfalls, the mayor won't be dipping his hands into your pockets to find the funds, CBS 2's Marcia Kramer reported.

"The budget we're submitting won't impose any new taxes on New Yorkers. [It] maintains the strength of the NYPD and continued or strong support for public schools," Bloomberg said.

True, but there is no money in the budget to keep open 20 fire companies throughout the five boroughs, something the City Council will have to fight the mayor on. In addition, 52,000 children currently in city-sponsored after-school programs serving low income neighborhoods will lose their spots to save \$170 million.

"Although budget constraints do force us to make cuts in some services, keep in mind those reductions are against levels of service that our administration raised to historic highs during better economic times," Bloomberg said.

"When we can afford it, we can provide more services. When we can't it's more difficult to do, but we are still going to provide services that the less fortunate need and that all of us need."

However, the city does plan to hire more teachers — about 1,000 — for the first time since 2008. Many of the teachers will be in special education schools like P.S. 178 in the Bronx, which is regarded as one of the best of its kind in the city.

Little Ricky DeJesus is an autistic second grader.

"We have our therapists here; our occupational therapist is here; the psychologists are on site. The teachers are always willing to work with the parents," Madeline DeJesus said.

The teachers at P.S. 178 hope some of the city's largess filters down to them.

“These teachers need help. These students need help. Sometimes you have two tough kids and that’s tough. That’s why we need more teachers and more teachers’ assistants,” special ed paraprofessional Sule Jawula said.

The city is proud of its improving economy. Despite the continuing recession, the city has recovered 180 percent of the private sector jobs lost in the downturn. That compares with just 40 percent nationwide. Officials said.

The biggest gains have been scored in tourism and the film and movie business, officials said.

<http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2012/05/03/mayor-michael-bloomberg-set-to-unveil-budget-proposal/>

The New York Times

New York's Children Shouldn't Pay the Price

Editorial

May 4, 2012

Mayor Michael Bloomberg this week put out his revised proposal for the next city budget — a \$68.7 billion plan that spares teachers, police and firefighters but slashes vital programs for needy children. That is not the way to balance a budget.

The mayor's budget and other changes will result in losses of about \$150 million to city day-care and after-school programs. The programs are a lifeline for the working poor — without them many parents would have to give up their jobs and stay home to care for their children. They are also vital for children and young people who need the extra preparation the programs provide. The City Council can usually be counted on to restore some of these cuts. But it must fight even harder to expand the programs, not allow them to diminish every year.

The city's child-care and after-school programs have been cut from 137,000 places in 2009 to 94,000 today. The new budget would reduce that further to about 53,000. In these hard economic times, the need, and the waiting lists, are growing.

Mayor Bloomberg on Friday announced that a program called Early Learn NYC would cover about 43,000 of the 50,000 children now in city child care and Head Start programs. The program sounds promising, with nutrition and health care provided along with childhood education. But 7,000 children should not be dropped from the rolls.

On Thursday the mayor boasted that this budget had no new taxes and no cuts for teachers, police officers and firefighters. When pressed about the cut in children's programs, he said, "The city cannot do everything for everybody." That is true. But Mr. Bloomberg and the Council need to do a lot more for the city's neediest children.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/05/opinion/new-yorks-children-shouldnt-pay-the-price.html? r=2&ref=opinion>

GOTHAM SCHOOLS

City's early childhood overhaul moves forward, draws criticism

By Phillissa Cramer

May 4, 2012

An overhaul of the city's child-care offerings that has concerned providers and advocates for nearly a year took a major step forward today, when the city announced which centers would receive new contracts for next year.

The city awarded contracts to 149 child-care providers on the basis of quality and experience. But providers that together currently offer more than 6,500 spots did not get contracts. On top of the proposed cuts to after school programs included in Mayor Bloomberg's budget proposal, more than 14,000 city children could go without care next year.

The overhaul, called EarlyLearn, is meant to improve the quality of city-funded programs and allocate seats more efficiently across neighborhoods. Last fall, providers had to reapply for contracts with the city — and the requirements were steep.

Here's what we wrote about the reauthorization process last summer:

The new standards are steep: Programs must show how they provide support to parents, create a challenging curriculum that prepares students for kindergarten and instruct children in health and safety. They need to find more time for staff development, guarantee service for children with special needs and be assessed annually according to a new grading program. Children will need to be screened for health, social and hygienic needs and assessed for academic gains. Some programs will have to expand their hours of operation. And for the first time, centers will need to pay for a portion of this themselves.

Resistance to the overhaul has grown as its implications have grown clearer.

Last August, members of the City Council asked the city to delay the rollout. And earlier this week, DC-37, the union that represents many child-care workers, went to court to seek an injunction against the city's implementation of EarlyLearn, charging that that overhaul reflected a back-door approach to slashing jobs.

Criticism of the implementation continued today. Advocates said they were relieved that the city had awarded contracts for more child care seats than anticipated but remained distressed by the sweeping cuts that the city has proposed this year.

"Unless we preserve all our childcare seats, we are setting back working families and stealing opportunities from kids in need," said Public Advocate Bill de Blasio, a 2013 mayoral contender. "The mayor needs to match rhetoric with action and stop the downsizing of early education."

But city officials said today's contract announcement marked a watershed moment in city child-care history.

"*EarlyLearn NYC* is the most significant innovation in New York City's early care and education system in 50 years," Ronald Richter, commissioner of the Administration for Children's Services, said in a statement today. "We will be providing the working families of this City higher quality services in our neighborhoods of greatest need."

<http://gothamschools.org/2012/05/04/citys-early-childhood-overhaul-moves-forward-draws-criticism/>

The New York Times

Protesters Rally Against Proposed Cuts in After-School Care

By Peter Moskowitz

May 4, 2012

When Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg released his executive budget on Thursday, it confirmed the worst fears of many parents and advocates for after-school programs.

As many as 25,000 seats in city-financed after-school programs could be eliminated by September, a reduction of about half of the 53,000 seats that were available this year. The City Council still has to approve Mr. Bloomberg's budget, and lawmakers have vowed to fight to restore the cuts.

On Thursday night, about 500 parents, children and administrators attended a rally on the Lower East Side, where many of the programs that would face elimination are located. They filled the auditorium inside Public School 137 and then spilled out onto the street.

Tameeka Ford Norville, who runs eight after-school programs in Brooklyn and Manhattan for University Settlement, a nonprofit, found out that four of her programs are on the chopping block.

She said the proposed cuts had left her shocked.

"I don't have time to process the emotional part of it," she said. "I think I'm just ready to fight."

She worries that without programs like hers, young people will have nothing productive to do after school and might make wrong choices.

Christian Robertson, an 8-year-old currently enrolled in one of Ms. Ford Norville's programs, said his alternative to the after-school program would be to sit home and watch television.

"I'm going to be bored," he said.

For many parents at the rally, the consequences of the cuts were potentially more serious. "I'd have to leave my job," said Yasmin Bracero, 30, who works as an administrator at a city homeless shelter.

There were a few signs of hope at the rally when City Council members said they would fight to keep after-school financing in the budget.

After-school programs are often among the first budget items restored in the perennial budget dance between City Hall and the City Council. But Councilwoman Margaret Chin, who represents Lower Manhattan, said Mr. Bloomberg's proposed cuts were large enough this year that the traditional tango might be thrown off kilter.

"I don't know if this is a budget dance," she said. "In a dance you're a partner. This is an outright assault."

<http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/04/protesters-rally-against-proposed-cuts-in-after-school-care/?ref=nyregion>



Community Groups Fight to Save After School Programs

By Ed Litvak

May 3, 2012

Community advocates are awaiting the release today of Mayor Michael Bloomberg's executive budget — and hoping he's heard their pleas to restore funding for after school programs and daycare.

Last week, social service organizations received word that nearly 200 programs would be eliminated. The Lower East Side — with its heavy concentration of publicly funded facilities — has been hit especially hard. This evening, local elected officials and non-profit organizations are sponsoring a town hall meeting to galvanize support for saving the programs. It will be held at P.S. 134, 293 East Broadway, at 6 p.m.

If the mayor and City Council do not restore the funding, programs at Lower East Side schools P.S. 2, P.S. 20, P.S. 124, P.S. 142, P.S. 137 and P.S. 140 would be forced to shut down. Across the city, about 25,000 kids would be served as opposed to 53,000 who are now attending various programs.

At a news conference held yesterday, David Chen of the Chinese American Planning Council (which runs three of the programs slated for closure) said the impact in Chinatown would be devastating. He estimated about 700 children would be turned away. Chen added that the after school programming provides critical support to immigrant families in coping with the often bewildering public school system.

The situation at Henry Street Settlement, another neighborhood service provider, would be even worse. The city is planning to pull funding from five of its programs. Among the potential casualties: Henry Street's Boys & Girls Republic community center on East 6th Street. The center is one of the few safe refuges for kids living along Avenue D and has recently been a focal point of the Manhattan District Attorneys office, which has launched an anti-violence recreational program at the facility.

In an interview yesterday, David Garza, Henry Street's executive director, called the funding cuts "an assault" on working families. "When there's no stable (after school) support system, parents cannot stay employed and they cannot properly care for their children," he said. It's well established, he argued, that early childhood programs provide communities the best insurance against a whole range of problems, including crime, poverty and the need for much more costly social programs.

Officials at other LES non-profits echoed Garza's sentiments. Michael Zisser, head of University Settlement, noted that the City Council has managed to restore after school programs eliminated by the mayor in past years, but given the large funding gap, would not be able to make up the difference this time. Lynn Applebaum, chief program officer at the Educational Alliance, said her organization would be forced to serve 800 fewer children next year. "It simply doesn't make sense at a time in which there's a crisis in education," she said. "It's a huge setback."

A few moments ago, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver released a letter sent to the mayor urging him to reconsider the after school funding cuts. Here's a portion of that letter:

As you prepare your executive budget for the upcoming fiscal year, I ask that you consider the dire consequences that these cuts would have on our communities. Tens of thousands of children throughout our city would have no place to go after school and could be forced out into the streets. Thousands could lose their jobs, creating a negative economic impact on our neighborhoods and further disrupting families. I understand the city is facing challenging fiscal circumstances but I implore you to find ways to overcome these challenges without cutting these vital programs, which are so important to many of our most vulnerable residents.

<http://www.thelodownny.com/leslog/2012/05/community-groups-fight-to-save-after-school-programs.html>

Hundreds Rally Against After-School Cuts on Lower East Side

By Julie Shapiro

May 4, 2012

LOWER EAST SIDE — More than 500 people packed into P.S. 134/P.S. 137 on East Broadway Thursday night to rail against the mayor's proposed cuts to after-school programs.

Elected officials rallied the crowd with chants of "What do we want? After-school! When do we want it? Now!" and then handed the microphone to a handful of the more than 27,000 children who are slated to lose their after-school programs in the fall.

"I am frightened about what will happen to me if after-school ends," said Alexandria Woodcock, 10, a student at P.S. 110 on Delancey Street. "I am afraid of some of the people in my neighborhood.... I feel like the city doesn't even care about us kids."

The rally occurred several hours after Mayor Michael Bloomberg unveiled his executive budget, which slashes nearly 200 free after-school programs for elementary and middle school students across the city.

More than 2,000 of the lost after-school spots are in Lower Manhattan, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver said.

"Our Lower East Side community will be particularly hard-hit," Silver told the crowd at P.S. 134/P.S. 137 Thursday night. "We can't afford to let these programs be cut. We can't allow our hardworking families to be left without childcare. It's not right, and it must not stand."

Children in the audience waved hand-colored signs and cheered as drummers from the Henry Street Settlement's after-school program and hip-hop dancers from the Educational Alliance's Edgies Teen Center showed off their skills.

The capacity crowd overflowed out of the auditorium and onto the sidewalk, where police controlled the number of people who entered the building to ensure the rally did not become a fire hazard.

Many parents said they turned out because they wanted to show how important after-school programs are to the community.

"It's a safe haven for [the children] to come to," said Maria Casiano, 37, a Lower East Side resident whose daughter attends the after-school program at P.S. 134. "It's horrible," she added of the cuts, "a lot of parents need it."

Yasmin Bracero, 30, a single mom, said that without P.S. 134's free after-school program, there wouldn't be anyone to watch her 9-year-old son.

"I rely on it to be able to go to work," said Bracero, who is a general manager of a homeless shelter.

"Without this program, I wouldn't have a job."

Students at the rally said they like getting help with their homework, seeing their friends and playing outside.

"I'll be really sad," Amanda Villa, a fourth-grader at P.S. 63 in the East Village, said of the cuts, "because I'll have to take the school bus home."

Elected officials suggested that anyone who is concerned about the mayor's budget cuts call 311.

<http://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20120504/lower-east-side/hundreds-rally-against-after-school-cuts-on-lower-east-side>

Protesting Cuts to After School Programs

By Ed Litvak

May 4, 2012

It was quite a scene last night at P.S. 134 on East Broadway. Hours after Mayor Bloomberg released his budget, which includes deep cuts to NYC's after school programs, hundreds of parents and kids descended on the Lower East Side school to express their anger and concern. So many people showed up at the rally that an overflow crowd was kept outside for much of the evening.

The event featured numerous pleas from elected officials — all of whom urged parents to raise their voices in defense of the after school programs. Addressing the crowd last night were: Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, U.S. Rep. Nydia Velazquez, Assemblyman Brian Kavanagh and City Council members Margaret Chin and Rosie Mendez.

Noting that the Lower East Side/Chinatown would lose 70% of its after school “seats,” Chin said, “I need to be able to count on you. Call the mayor, call 311... This is a call to action.” Silver added, “make sure every one of you is heard at City Hall.” Velazquez said, “working families are under attack... we work hard to bring (federal) resources to the city... now the city needs to do what is right.”

The Bloomberg budget would cut after school support to more than 25,000 children. In a news conference yesterday, the mayor called the programs “extremely valuable,” but explained that in lean economic times, “we cannot do everything for everybody.” Council Speaker Christine Quinn said later in the afternoon that restoring the after school funding would be her top budget priority in negotiations with Bloomberg.

Last night's event was spearheaded by University Settlement, Henry Street Settlement, the Chinese American Planning Council and the Educational Alliance. Programs they administer would be eliminated as part of the Bloomberg plan. Chinese Planning Council is holding another rally next week, on May 10th, at P.S. 24, 40 Division Street. It begins at 6 p.m.

<http://www.thelodownny.com/leslog/2012/05/after-school-budget-cuts-elected-officials-urge-parents-to-speak-out.html>



700 People Shout to Push to Restore OST Program

By Di Wang

May 4, 2012

New York – Mayor Bloomberg’s new fiscal year budget will cut the OST program and Lower East Manhattan will lose 3,000 OST spots. Yesterday (May 3rd), about 700 parents and children gathered at PS 137 located at East Broadway to protest, asking the city government to restore this funding, otherwise, in the Fall a large number of children will have no place to go after school and could be forced into the streets. The negative impact is hard to imagine.

Many elected officials including State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver joined protests and made speeches.



By Fang Meng

May 4, 2012

New York – Yesterday, at the protest meeting organized by PS 134 and PS 137 in Lower East Side, many elected officials called on parents to pick up the phone and call 311 asking not to cut OST program.

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver also said that these cuts would have a particularly devastating impact on Lower East Side and Chinatown communities and that in total, more than 2,000 children in Lower Manhattan would be left without after-school program.

Opposition to After-School and Child Care Cuts Spreads Across City

By NYNP

May 8, 2012

Opposition to Mayor Michael Bloomberg's proposed cuts to early childhood and after-school programs is moving beyond the usual confines of City Hall park and is rapidly spreading to neighborhoods and communities across the City. Over the next few days, a number of rallies are being organized by advocates, community groups and nonprofit service providers in Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx and upper Manhattan.

Last week, it was learned that 172 Out of School Time programs serving almost 25,000 elementary and middle school children will be closing as new contracts are awarded which conform to funding levels in the Mayor's Executive Budget for FY2012-13. This represents a 43% reduction in the overall number of OST programs available for New York City children. On Friday, the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) announced contract award recommendations for the new EarlyLearn NYC program which will reduce the number of subsidized slots in City-funded centers by approximately 6,000. Additional cuts are being made to the number of child care vouchers being made available to eligible families.

This Afternoon in Northern Manhattan

This afternoon, elected officials will join advocates and thousands of parents and children from Northern Manhattan in a rally against cuts to child care and after-school programs. The event is scheduled for 4:00 at the 172nd Street & Amsterdam Ave. entrance to Highbridge Park.

Advocates estimate that Northern Manhattan, a section of the city with one of the highest poverty rates, will lose between 1,500 and 3,000 afterschool programs come September 1 as a result of the cut. The four Northern Manhattan council districts alone will lose twenty-six after-school programs.

Council Members Ydanis Rodriguez and Robert Jackson, NYS State Senator Adriano Espaillat, NYS Assembly Member Guillermo Linares and other elected officials are expected to join such provider groups as Alianza Dominicana, ACDP, Children's Aid Society, Children's Arts and Science Workshop, Community League of the Heights, Fresh Youth Initiative, Police Athletic League, Washington Heights Inwood Coalition, YM & YWHA of Washington Heights Inwood and Campaign4Children. In the event of rain, the rally will be held at - United Palace Cathedral Auditorium- 4140 Broadway at 175th Street**

This Afternoon in Flushing

At 4:30 this afternoon, the Korean American Family Service Center (KAFSC) along with other community-

based organizations that serve pan-Asian families will be joined by local city and state elected officials at a press conference at P.S. 20 Auditorium, 142-30 Barclay Ave, Flushing. Assemblywoman Grace Meng, Council Members Peter Koo and Dan Halloran along with representatives from the affected communities, supporters, and leaders in the Asian American Community will speak out against the budget cuts and ask for Mayor Bloomberg to restore funding. Comments of frustration and anger over these losses are being heard throughout the community as well as from a number of city and state officials.

Queens lost 29 programs, which is a decrease of 36% from 81 to 52 programs. In total, an estimated 172 programs will be lost and nearly 25,000 children will have to find alternative after school programs across New York City. Among those facing closure are KAFSC's HODORI After-School Program, three Chinese-American Planning Council OST contracts at PS 2M, PS 124M, PS 20 Queens, and a program operated by the Child Center of New York.

Tomorrow in Cypress Hills

An estimated 200 parents, children and teachers from Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation's after school programs will stage a protest against Mayor Bloomberg's plans to slash after school and child care funding. Children from Cypress Hills' after school programs will take to the streets, demonstrating what will happen if their after school care is eliminated. They will join in recreation (jumping rope, hop scotch and hula hoop), art projects, and drama and musical activities on the community's shopping street.

Instead of the traditional celebration of after school programs, called "Lights on After School," which has been an annual celebration of the positive impact that after school programs have in children's lives, Cypress Hills' residents will demonstrate against the dismantling of the Out of School Time (OST) system in New York City by conducting their own "Lights Off After School" afternoon. The after school programs will be conducted on the streets as parents distribute flyers urging other community residents to call 311 to oppose the Mayor's plan to balance the City's FY 13 budget on the backs of young people and struggling families.

The rally is scheduled for 3:30 on May 9th at Crescent and Fulton Streets

Tomorrow in Sunnyside

At 3:30 tomorrow afternoon, May 9th, after-school students from PS150Q will march through the neighborhood. and return for a rally in the PS 150 school yard. Joining them will be parents, teachers and elected officials including Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer. Judy Zanzwill, Executive Director of Sunnyside Community Services will also address the gathering. PS 150 Q is located at 40-01 43 Avenue, Sunnyside, NY 11104.

Tomorrow in Brooklyn

NIA Community Services Network has schedule three rallies at 4:00 tomorrow afternoon in support of its OST programs at PS 186, 7601 19th Avenue; PS 229 (1400 Benson Avenue) and IS281 (8787 24th Avenue). NIA is scheduled to lose its programs at PS 186 and PS 229.

<http://www.nynp.biz/index.php/breaking-news/10266-opposition-to-after-school-and-child-care-cuts-spreads-across-city->



Advocates and pols pan after-school cuts

May 10, 2012

By Anna Gustafson

While Queens education advocates and legislators praised Mayor Bloomberg for restoring close to 2,600 teaching positions in the executive budget he released last week, they panned his proposal to axe funding for after-school programs throughout the city, including 29 sites in the borough.

The mayor's \$68.7 billion proposed budget, which must be approved by the City Council before any of its measures are implemented, does not cut 2,570 teachers through attrition, as Bloomberg originally proposed earlier this year, but it does slash about \$170 million to children's services. The cut in youth funding could result in the number of after-school programs in Queens to drop from 81 to 52, according to the Campaign for Children. Additionally, seven Beacon programs — essentially community centers for children and adults — in the city would be closed, including one at JHS 190 in Forest Hills and another at MS 58 in Bayside.

Thousands of Queens children in neighborhoods throughout the borough stand to be impacted. The two Beacon sites alone serve more than 2,000 students in their after-school programs.

"In this challenging economy, our center was already doing the best we could to provide quality services with the disproportionately small funding available to serve our community," said Grace Yoon, the executive director of the Korean American Family Service Center in Flushing. "Now, the funding source has dried up and our children are left with nowhere to go after school ends. These kinds of decisions by Mayor Bloomberg to take away funding from our children and youth does not send them the message that we believe that they are the future and are individuals worth investing in."

Legislators also slammed the mayor for proposing to eliminate funding for after-school programs that they said give thousands of children with working parents a place to go in the afternoon and evening, during which time they can do everything from receive homework help to play sports.

"Let me be clear — although I am grateful for the progress we've seen in the mayor's executive budget, I still have deep concerns about how the remaining cuts will impact the lives of working New Yorkers and their families," Council Speaker Christine Quinn (D-Manhattan) said in a prepared statement.

Queens Borough President Helen Marshall joined the chorus of lawmakers critical of the mayor's budget.

"In tough economic times, the last thing that we should be slashing are essential early education and after-school services that children and hard-working families need to survive," Marshall said.

Less controversial than Bloomberg's call to cut youth services is the restoration of about 2,570 teaching positions in his budget.

"New York City has lost thousands of teachers over the last few years, and it's good news to hear that we will be adding educators to the system," United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew said. "I can't thank the City Council enough for making education a priority."

http://www.qchron.com/editions/south/advocates-and-pols-pan-after-school-cuts/article_a45ccd7c-8cb4-503a-9b2e-b87bec284b67.html

Queens to lose 30+ after-school programs this year

May 10, 2012

By Clare Trapasso

The city's plan to cut after-school and youth programs has inspired Queens leaders, parents and students to take to the streets and rally to save their centers.

The city plans to cut more than 30 programs in Queens this year — which could place a hefty burden on working families who can't afford child care, advocates said.

There were at least three demonstrations across the city on Wednesday to support various after-school programs and centers.

“Without these programs, some parents have said they might have to give up their jobs,” said [Assemblywoman Grace Meng \(D-Flushing\)](#). “They have no one to watch their kids after school.”

The mayor typically doesn't include funding for various programs in his proposed fiscal year budget. Many programs, such after-school centers, have been restored by the City Council in budget talks.

A city Department of Youth and Community Development official said 25,000 after- and summer-school slots, known as Out-of-School Time, were cut citywide. The agency didn't immediately respond to repeated requests for Queens-specific data.

[Monica Guzman](#), director of development at Sunnyside Community Services, said this is the third time the city tried to yank funds from its after-school program at Public School 150 in Sunnyside.

“It's been absolutely exhausting for everyone involved,” said Guzman, whose group marched in protest Wednesday.

Deep Ghosh, a representative on the Afterschool Alliance, a national advocacy group, said he's worried thousands of kids served by the programs will get in trouble without center supervision.

The Police Athletic League also lost funding for two Queens centers. PAL is fundraising and putting pressure on the Council to restore the money.

“It may mean that we have to scale back some parts of the program [or\] numbers of children served,” said [PAL Executive Director Alana Sweeny](#).

[Irma Rodriguez](#), executive director of the Queens Community House, which lost funding for four centers, said the “programs have been taking cuts for years.”

“This is the straw that broke the camel’s back,” she said.

[Patrick Pinchinat](#), director of the Community House’s Beacon program, which serves children and adults at Junior High School 190, said he was “disgusted” that the center is also slated to close.

“Every day kids are crying,” he said. “We’re like their second family here.”

<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/queens/queens-lose-30-after-school-programs-year-article-1.1075304#ixzz1uTna8grt>

DitmasParkPatch

Mathieu Eugene, CAMBA March to Save Afterschool Program

May 10, 2012

By Caitlin Nolan

CAMBA, the New York Youth Alliance and students of PS 139 marched in Ditmas Park Wednesday, May 9 to protest afterschool program cuts from the city's 2013 budget.

"You can count on my steadfast support," Councilman Mathieu Eugene told students, parents and other supporters who stopped in front of the Cortelyou Road branch of the Brooklyn Public Library, holding signs that read "Save CAMBA" and chanting, "What do we want? Afterschool! When do we want it? Now!"

"I'm proud to be here to show you my support," Eugene continued. "I'm going to fight for you."

"I think CAMBA's great," third-grader Phoenix Polemarhakis told Ditmas Park Patch. He said that people from the program help him with his homework, which is very helpful to his mom who works in Manhattan.

"CAMBA makes me feel safe," said fourth-grader Michael Williams. "If there was no CAMBA, I don't know what I'd be doing or where I'd be."

Sandra Israel, mother of second-grader Ameliyah Bastien also shared Williams' sentiments. "It's a security for me because I'm a single mom," she said. "I wouldn't be able to go to school to finish my sociology degree [if the program was cut]."

"I hope they don't close CAMBA," said Alyssa Cruz, a fifth-grader from PS 139. "This is my third year with CAMBA, and they always help me with homework and have different kinds of games like Jeopardy."

The march was part of a city-wide "Lights off" day where all New York City afterschool programs are encouraged by Campaign for Children to participate and raise awareness of the issue.

<http://ditmaspark.patch.com/articles/mathieu-eugene-camba-march-to-save-afterschool-program#photo-9879613>

Community advocates rally against cuts to after school programs

May 09, 2012

By Sandra E. García

Directly after the Mayor unveiled his executive budget this past Thurs., May 3rd, which revealed major cuts for Out of School (OST) and after-school programs, the steps of City Hall were flooded with northern Manhattan after-school providers, staff, advocates and parents, and elected officials protesting what some have termed "draconian" and "unimaginable."

"I've been in this field for 20 years and have never seen the likes of this," said Angelo Ortiz, LCSW-R, Unit Director of Inwood Community Services, Inc./ UNIDOS Coalition Coordinator.

In announcing his \$68.7 billion budget proposal, Mayor Bloomberg proposes cutting early childhood and after school programs – for the fifth straight year.

Local advocates argue that northern Manhattan stands to be disproportionately affected by the funding cuts; early assessments point to over 2 million dollars being cut from local programs.

They estimate that over 47,000 children in northern Manhattan will lose child care and after school programs under the proposed budget, and that it will cut more than half of the neighborhood's programs.

"What Mayor Bloomberg doesn't realize is that we (after school programs) are a corporation that also provide jobs to the community," said Soledad Hiciano, Executive Director at the Community Association of Progressive Dominicans (ACDP) of her program directors, coordinators and staff.

"This is unacceptable," said Hiciano, passionately. "We need to put our children first."

And the community-based organizations in Washington Heights and Inwood have galvanized, quickly and forcefully.

On Wednesday morning, on the day before the Mayor was to unveil his budget, advocates that included representatives from Alianza Dominicana, Children's Aid Society, the Children Arts and Sciences Workshop, ACDP, Fresh Youth Initiatives (FYI), Community League of the Heights (C.L.O.T.H.), the Police Athletic League (P.A.L.), and representatives from local New York City Councilmembers Ydanis Rodriguez and Robert Jackson, New York State Assemblymembers Guillermo Linares and Herman D. Farrell, among others, gathered in an early morning meeting to brain-storm about strategies to ward off the cuts.

The atmosphere, while charged with disappointment and anger, spoke to coordinated efforts and collaboration.

Among the topics discussed were organizing the downtown rally the following day in protest, and a flurry of daily letters and flyers to inform and organize parents, at each organization's site, in an effort to underscore how dire the impending cuts would be.

"The entire 10033 zip code has been wiped of programs," said Eddie Silverio, of Alianza Dominicana. "We need to change the policy, when from 160th to Dyckman Street, we are saying there are no afterschool programs."

Al Kurland, Contracts and Compliance Manager for the Police Athletic League, believes that fewer programs increase incarceration rates in the city.

"A way to prevent needless incarceration is early intervention with programs," said Kurland. "We can not guarantee a productive generation by cutting back programs. We must be invested in our children."

In order to underscore the drastic cuts, each program director will be distributing "pink slips" to parents and guardians at each of their sites in the coming days to make clear that families will soon be without programs.

And at Thursday's rally, parents at the rally expressed what one mother termed as "desperation."

Others also pointed up the consequences for local economy, when parents who rely on after school programs to keep their children safe and engaged may well be forced to leave their jobs – precisely when under- and unemployment remain high.

"As a working parent, I work at an afterschool program, so I would have to make arrangements for somebody to baby sit my daughter while I work," said Evelyn Gomez, Executive Director of the afterschool program at MS 278.

Her daughter Gisloney is currently enrolled in Inwood Community Services OST program.

"I am from a low-income family and my husband and I both work," added Gomez. "We can barely make it now. It will be very hard for us."

<http://manhattantimesnews.com/MAY-9-2012/community-advocates-rally-against-cuts-to-after-school-programs.html>



Protestan contra recortes a programas de cuidado infantil

May 9, 2012

Por: Jonathan Inoa

Un pequeño ejército de niños con el apoyo de sus padres se reunieron en el auditorio del United Palace Cathedral para protestar contra el cierre de sus programas de después de la escuela.

"Me siento muy mal porque no vamos a hacer actividades y no voy a ver a mis maestras y no será lo mismo", dijo Sonialis Pérez, estudiante.

"Si ellos nos quieren impresionar por qué no lo mejoran en vez de quitárnoslo. Yo pienso que es una equivocación grande lo que ellos hicieron", dijo Asalfás Hernández, estudiante.

El presupuesto del Alcalde para el año fiscal 2013 no provee los fondos para continuar estos programas para cerca de 45.000 niños de toda la ciudad.

"Me duele porque yo se lo que el programa después de la escuela significa para todos los niños. Esto significa una ayuda extra que no le dan en la escuela, una persona en quién puedan confiar que no son sus padres o un maestro con cualquier pregunta o cualquier situación que tengan", dijo Yolise Fajardo, maestra.

Por esta razón el Concejal Ydanis Rodríguez con el apoyo de otros políticos locales, realizó esta protesta. En Washington Hights, área que el representa, más de 1.500 niños serían afectados.

"Son programas fundamentales, decisivos ya que muchos de estos programas son los que complementan la educación de nuestros jóvenes, nuestros niños cuando las escuelas son cerradas a las tres de la tarde. Estos jóvenes son de familias que no tienen una entrada económica para pagarle programas como Lo hacen otras comunidades de clase media alta", dijo Ydanis Rodríguez.

Y para motivar a los niños, Ydanis trajo de ejemplo a un joven dominicano, que continuó sus estudios y ahora es un exitoso músico que toca la batería.

"La educación es lo principal, no se puede llegar a ningún lado sin la educación ni preparación. Entonces eso es lo único que los gobiernos no nos pueden quitar", dijo Pablo Rafael Pena, músico.

El concejal dice que él y otros compañeros ni piensan aprobar el presupuesto hasta que el Alcalde encuentre los fondos para mantener estos programas.

<http://www.ny1noticias.com/content/inicio/160835/protestan-contra-recortes-a-programas-de-cuidado-infantil>

Queens to lose 30+ after-school programs this year

By Clare Trapasso

May 10, 2012

The city's plan to cut after-school and youth programs has inspired Queens leaders, parents and students to take to the streets and rally to save their centers.

The city plans to cut more than 30 programs in Queens this year — which could place a hefty burden on working families who can't afford child care, advocates said.

There were at least three demonstrations across the city on Wednesday to support various after-school programs and centers.

"Without these programs, some parents have said they might have to give up their jobs," said Assemblywoman Grace Meng (D-Flushing). "They have no one to watch their kids after school."

The mayor typically doesn't include funding for various programs in his proposed fiscal year budget. Many programs, such as after-school centers, have been restored by the City Council in budget talks.

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Read more: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/queens/queens-lose-30-after-school-programs-year-article-1.1075304#ixzz1uy7JnJhi>



Advocates and pols pan after-school cuts

By Anna Gustafson

May 10, 2012

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"Let me be clear — although I am grateful for the progress we've seen in the mayor's executive budget, I still have deep concerns about how the remaining cuts will impact the lives of working New Yorkers and their families," Council Speaker Christine Quinn (D-Manhattan) said in a prepared statement.

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school services that children and hard-working families need to survive,” Marshall said.

Less controversial than Bloomberg’s call to cut youth services is the restoration of about 2,570 teaching positions in his budget.

“New York City has lost thousands of teachers over the last few years, and it’s good news to hear that we will be adding educators to the system,” United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew said. “I can’t thank the City Council enough for making education a priority.”

Read more at: http://www.qchron.com/editions/south/advocates-and-pols-pan-after-school-cuts/article_a45ccd7c-8cb4-503a-9b2e-b87bec284b67.html

GOTHAM SCHOOLS

Mayor's comment provides fodder for critics of child care cuts

By Geoff Decker

May 11, 2012

Critics of Mayor Bloomberg's plan to slash after-school services to tens of thousands of students are forecasting that the cuts will have a grave effect.

Today, they earned an accidental endorsement from an unusual source: Bloomberg.

"We have a lot of kids who unfortunately don't have parents at home when they leave in the morning or get home in the afternoon and it's harder to supervise kids," Bloomberg said during a radio appearance this morning to promote the city's anti-truancy campaign.

The comments were convenient fodder for Public Advocate Bill De Blasio, who released a report today that painted a doomsday scenario about how the cuts would contribute to crime and hurt citywide employment rates.

De Blasio called Bloomberg "disconnected" and said the issues he raised on the radio were precisely a reason to preserve the after-school programs.

"One of the reasons these kids have to be home alone is that we continue to ... take resources away," De Blasio said. "Is it any surprise that children have to be home alone if we've taken away from parents the options that they can afford to give their kids a safe environment while they're at work?"

Bloomberg's budget would eliminate 32,000 after-school spots, including 27,000 in the city's largest program, known as Out-of-School Time.

"We know the most likely time for kids to be involved negative activities are right after school between 3pm and 6pm," De Blasio said. "That's exactly when after school programs are available to young people."

The after-school cuts would save the city more than \$80 million, according to De Blasio's report.

The report, titled "Cut Now, Pay Later," also outlines how cuts to shut down child care center would have long-term effects on taxpayers.

Bloomberg's cuts would also eliminate a total of 6,500 seats from the city's EarlyLearn program will be eliminated, saving the city \$65 million. De Blasio's report points to a Massachusetts Institute of Technology study that found that every dollar invested in such programs saves \$13 to taxpayers down the road.

"We have to make an investment in our future," De Blasio said at a press conference at City Hall today. "If we don't we will pay the price in many, many ways."

It's the fourth straight year that Bloomberg has cut child care and after-school programs, amounting to a 60 percent reduction in the number of after-school and child care seats since 2009. But this year's cuts are the steepest yet and with no teaching jobs at stake, it is emerging as the main fight between City Council members and Bloomberg.

The two sides have until June 30 to finalize the budget.

Read more at: <http://gothamschools.org/2012/05/11/mayors-comment-provides-fodder-for-critics-of-child-care-cuts/>

Bloomberg's Proposed Cuts 'Dire' for Children, de Blasio Report Charges

By Trevor Kapp

May 11, 2012

NEW YORK — Mayor Michael Bloomberg's proposal to slash child care and after-school programs could have "dire consequences" for children, families and city government, Public Advocate Bill de Blasio charged in a new report.

The 2013 executive budget proposes to cut \$175 million from early childcare and education programs and vouchers, the report charges, and threatens to pass on \$845 million in costs to future mayoral administrations to make up for the deficiencies.

Some 47,000 children are in danger of losing services, de Blasio's report charges.

"You cannot be an 'Education Mayor' if you tear early education and after school programs to pieces," he said. "These cuts enacted year after year will kick the stool out from under tens of thousands of working families, and set back an entire generation of kids."

De Blasio's report, dubbed "Cut Now, Pay Later," urges investments in early childhood education instead of the proposed cuts. He argues that the down payment will save taxpayers money, grow the economy, prevent crime and improve kids' health.

Councilwoman Margaret Chin, who represents the Lower East Side and Chinatown criticized the proposed cuts, too, calling them "some of the most debilitating our city has ever seen." She added that her district stands to lose 70 percent of its after-school programs.

"All of these programs provide culturally and linguistically competent service and have a history of full enrollment," she said. "Despite the demonstrated demand for these services, Mayor Bloomberg has decided that our community can go without."

But a spokeswoman for the mayor said de Blasio's math is way off.

"The numbers in the report are wrong," the spokeswoman said.

She said the budget proposes to cut nearly \$72 million, and not \$175 million.

"Fiscal realities have impacted this program like nearly all areas of the budget," she added, referring to the child care system, "and we will working with the City Council on a final budget."

The mayor has until June 30 to finalize the budget with the City Council.

Read more: <http://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20120511/new-york-city/bloombergs-proposed-cuts-dire-for-children-de-blasio-report-charges#ixzz1uyAag4dg>

Bill de Blasio: Mayor's Budget Guts Child Services

By Celeste Katz

May 11, 2012

Mayor Bloomberg's proposed budget will gut crucial social services, including child care and afterschool programs for 47,000 kids, Public Advocate Bill de Blasio charges in a report.

According to "Cut Now, Pay Later," de Blasio's office finds "this loss of 6,500 early care and education slots alone in this year's budget will hand future administrations at least \$845 million in future costs for remediation, health care, lost wages and add public safety."

The PA (and potential 2013 mayoral candidate) calculates Bloomberg's plan, if enacted as written, would slash \$175 million from vital programs in early care and education, vouchers and the Out-of-School Time, Beacon and NYCHA Cornerstone programs.

"You cannot be an 'Education Mayor' if you tear early education and afterschool programs to pieces. These cuts -- enacted year after year -- will kick the stool out from under tens of thousands of working families, and set back an entire generation of kids," said de Blasio.

Bloomberg spokeswoman Samantha Levine questioned de Blasio's math, saying the mayor's plan cuts \$71.7 million -- including about \$53.3 million for ACS child care and \$18.4 million for DCYD's Out-of-School Time -- not \$175 million.

"The Mayor built the city's child care system up to levels never before seen while turning the system into a national model, but fiscal realities have impacted this program like nearly all areas of the budget and we will be working with the City Council on a final budget," Levine said.

"Our newest reforms [such as the Early Learn program] will standardize education as part of child care, giving us the opportunity to transform the system from the ground up and bring quality early care and education to New York's neediest and youngest children."

Read more at: <http://www.nydailynews.com/blogs/dailypolitics/2012/05/bill-de-blasio-mayors-budget-guts-child-services>

Fred Dolan Art Academy, which helped 17 Bronx kids go to college, faces shutdown without more funding

By Kerry Wills

May 13, 2012

A Saturday arts program that has helped 17 at-risk Bronx kids go to college is facing closure because of a funding shortage.

Children's Aid Society, the primary funder of the Fred Dolan Art Academy, anticipates it will lose \$1.3 million in city funding for after school programs like the art school.

"We're facing significant cuts from some of our key sites in East Harlem, Washington Heights, and the Bronx," said Katherine Eckstein, director of public policy for CAS. "We don't know what we're going to do."

This year Fred Dolan Art Academy in Belmont celebrates its first student to reach the Ivy League. Pauline Lewis, 18, a senior at Millennium Art Academy, received a full scholarship to attend Dartmouth College to major in finance with a minor in art.

Lewis, daughter of a maintenance man and a cosmetologist, said she always had the drive to attend college, but professional artists who teach at the weekend class gave her an advantage that let her aim high.

"They help to refine your style and achieve those pieces that wow an admissions board," Lewis said.

One of Lewis' teachers, Kalimah Samuella, paid for Lewis to take an Ivy League tour of Yale, MIT and Harvard.

CAS will have to cut its contribution to \$15,000, down from \$32,000 in the current year.

"It's a wonderful program," said Anthony Ramos, a CAS spokesman. "It has helped a lot of kids succeed and go to college."

In the Bronx, 31 programs will be lost, while in upper Manhattan, 26 programs are expected to shut down.

Most of the 45 sixth- through twelfth-graders who have participated in the Academy since 2006 cannot attend college without scholarships, founder and director Neil Waldman said.

That includes Alejandro Tlaczani, 15, who lives with his mother and three siblings in a homeless shelter on 137th St.

Tlaczani, who is nearly deaf and wears a hearing aid, blew his art teachers away.

"His drawing ability is so remarkable," Waldman said.

Tlaczani is a good student at M.S. 331, but he said he struggles sometimes to communicate. At the academy,

where most learning is by visual example, Tlaczani learns quickly.

“He has an amazing eye,” Waldman said. “Art gives us a window into Alejandro’s world, and it shows us how special he is.”

“I want to go to a good college,” Tlaczani said at Middle School 45, where the weekend academy meets. “I want to make beautiful paintings.”

The academy never turns kids away, and every graduate has gone to college on scholarship.

Students must raise their grades and work three hours each Saturday on their art portfolios. One student raised his average from 52 to 87 in one marking period.

Unless the academy, named after a deceased school principal and friend of Waldman, can raise \$20,000 to fill the budget gap, it will have to close too.

The Dream Yard Project, the Bronx’s largest arts education provider, became a partner with the academy and is leading a fundraising effort. To donate, send checks to The Dream Yard Project, 1085 Washington Ave., Bronx, NY 10456. In the memo, write Fred Dolan Art Academy.

Read more: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/bronx/fred-dolan-art-academy-helped-17-bronx-kids-college-faces-shutdown-funding-article-1.1075932#ixzz1uyCtHaXb>



A Spring Rite: The NYC Budget Dance

By Cindy Rodriguez

May 14, 2012

Year in and year out, New York City's budget process works something like this: the mayor says the city has a deficit that runs in the billions of dollars; he uses the deficit as impetus to shed fire houses, reduce library hours, shrink subsidized day care centers and more; the city holds hearings and people protest; eventually — through negotiations with the mayor — the city council restores a significant portion of what the mayor proposed taking out.

The beginning of this spring ritual was on display at the release of Bloomberg's executive budget earlier this month. "You have to wait and see what we do," Bloomberg answered when asked about the loss of roughly 15,000 child care slots. "Like I told you, we will come to an agreement collaboratively with the city council on or before June 30th."

Moments after his address, a group of protesters from upper Manhattan were on the steps of City Hall, decrying the loss of after school programs expected to effect 31,000 children, more than half of all those who use the programs.

Councilman Robert Jackson of Northern Manhattan told protesters this was start of the so-called budget dance.

"I'm ready to dance around the room and dance around city hall," Jackson said. "As long as the services we need in Northern Manhattan and the city of New York are met."

Waiting for the Dance to End

But until there is a resolution, the cuts move forward, which means programs and services losing funding prepare to shut down, leaving clients stressed and scrambling.

At the O. Henry Learning Center in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan, single mother Nisha Tarrant is exasperated. Like the employees of the Hudson Guild Beacon After-School Program which her 10-year-old daughter attends, she's been told to prepare for the program to close. "My only option will be that my daughter walk to my job and sit down at my job. That would be my only option."

Hudson Guild Director Ken Jockers said his program is one of several facing the same instability. "There's no way to have this be anything but anxiety provoking for everybody involved," Jockers said.

Spring's Annual Budget Cut Offerings

The budget deadline is June 30. Until then no one really knows what cuts are all bluster and what cuts are real.

Part of the difficulty stems from the fact that each year some of the same cuts appear on the chopping block. Meals on Wheels for seniors, public libraries and child care subsidies are regulars at this political dance, getting traded and twirled about.

Teachers are also often threatened with layoffs. In 2011, Bloomberg proposed getting rid of 4,600 teachers but it never happened.

Fire houses have recently been regularly offered as possible sacrifice to the budget ritual. Doug Turetsky of the city's Independent Budget Office said fire companies became a regular target in 2009. At first, he recalled, the mayor started small with a proposal to close five fire companies in the evening only. The next year, Bloomberg proposed closing 17 completely and, in 2011, he upped the number to 20 fire companies.

"The council restored that in negotiations with the mayor. [In] 2012, the same 20 were proposed for closing, the same restoration. And now, 2013, there's a proposal out there for those same 20 fire companies to close again," Turetsky said.

Most of the time, the city council only restores funding for a year — so programs and services only get a temporary reprieve — which is why some of the same cuts appear year after year. Budget experts add it's rare for the mayor and city council to make permanent funding restorations.

Saving Programs, But Only Partially

Public relations expert George Arzt said this process, which produces anxiety for many, is actually beneficial to City Council members who are able to take credit for saving services and programs in their neighborhoods.

"You become a hero," Arzt said. "For the moment. Until you screw up the next time."

So, if cuts are ultimately going to be restored are all the rallies and protests really necessary? Arzt said it is crucial. Groups have to apply pressure or risk being ignored.

Still, even the most vocal and organized groups aren't always completely successful.

As Stephanie Gendell, with the Citizens Committee For Children, explains it, the process is more like erosion. She noted there are 31 percent fewer child care and after school slots in the city now compared to 2009.

"It never restores us fully," Gendell said. "It just restores part of the cut and so you continue to get it chipped away at and so it's not really just a budget dance. It's a budget dance where we lose ground every year."

Read more at: <http://www.wnyc.org/blogs/wnyc-news-blog/2012/may/14/spring-rite-nyc-budget-dance/>



After school programs face big cuts in funding

Art McFarland

Tuesday, May 15, 2012

LOWER EAST SIDE (WABC) -- Rehearsing for a show is one of the after school activities at P.S. 172, but the music will end next month under plans to cut city funding for after school programs.

An art program on the Lower East Side run by the not-for-profit educational alliance is also facing shutdowns along with many other established programs.

"It's going to have a huge negative impact, unfortunately," Karina Lynch, program director, said.

"A lot of these kids are children raising children. Their parents work late, so they're 5th graders watching 2nd and 3rd graders. They need somebody who is going to watch them," after school teacher Domingo Beltran said.

"And so the question is obvious: if after school funds are cut, affecting thousands of students, what will those kids do after school?"

Any programs start with Homework Help.

"I would not have time to do my homework and not have any support because my parents work a lot," student Danny Vargas said.

"If you can imagine the Lower East Side at 3 o'clock with thousands of kids, ages 5 to 18 with nowhere to go," Lynch said.

Nancy Maxwell and thousands of working parents depend on the free after school programs.

"Please, don't hurt our children. They're here to learn, we're here to work. I may have to quit my job," Maxwell said.

The mayor points out his proposed cuts are part of the budget process.

"But I would just say, wait until we come to a conclusion, a negotiation with the City Council, putting all the inputs and see what happens in that budget because that's the only budget that matters, and every year we go through the same thing," Mayor Michael Bloomberg said.

Meanwhile, the alliance and other after school providers are on notice and preparing for the worst, as they hope to find a way to survive.

<http://abclocal.go.com/wabc/story?section=news/education&id=8662650>

NORWOOD NEWS

‘Vital’ After-School Programs on the Chopping Block

By Alex Kratz

May 16, 2012



Photo by Alex Kratz Students at PS 94 in the Bronx's Norwood area participate in an after-school program that may be cut by the mayor's new budget.

Parents at PS 94 in Norwood have grown accustomed to having a safe, constructive place for their children to spend after-school hours and it hasn't cost them a dime. But Mayor Bloomberg is proposing to slash the after-school program, which would leave parents, 90 percent of whom are living in poverty, scrambling to find alternatives.

"This program is vital," said PS 94 Principal Diane Daprocida of a program known as Out-of-School Time (OST). "Parents are able to work and know that their kids are safe and being productive. It would be a huge loss to the community."

The after-school budget cuts, totaling \$22.1 million, would slice into 172 programs citywide and reduce the number of subsidized slots available for child care centers. Locally, the programs at PS 94 and PS 8 in Bedford Park would be cut completely and programs at PS 20 and PS 95 would be shrunk.

But the PS 94 community is fighting back, sending letters from parents and students to Bloomberg and enlisting the help of local Councilman Oliver Koppell who has vowed to oppose the cuts.

"It is imperative that funds be restored to the Department of Youth and Community Development's OST program," Koppell said in a statement. "Without this restoration, thousands of children in my district and throughout the city, will be deprived of the positive academic and recreational activities these programs offer, putting them at risk of engaging in negative behavior during these unsupervised hours."

Koppell pointed to studies by the Department of Education showing that crimes involving youth usually occur between 3 and 6 p.m., the hours OST operates.

“The risk our community will see an increase in violence, vandalism, gang activity and drug use and alcohol abuse, as well as an upsurge in the number of latchkey children, is virtually inevitable with the closing of these after-school programs,” Koppell said.



The after-school program at PS 94 aligns with the curriculum taught during regular school hours, giving students much needed bonus instruction. (Photo by Alex Kratz)

Daprocida said the programs allow parents to focus on vital responsibilities like keeping food on the table and a roof above their child’s head.

It also offers parents flexibility in their jobs, Daprocida said, which is crucial in the Bronx, a borough that suffers from a 13.6 percent unemployment rate, the worst in the state. “This community is struggling so much with employment opportunities,” Daprocida added.

Yanire Montanez, who runs the after-school program at PS 94, knows firsthand the benefits of the program. As a parent of students at PS 20, where the program is threatened as well, Montanez said she doesn’t know how her family would have survived without it.

Montanez said they align their program with the curriculum taught during the day at PS 94, but with a creative twist. On a recent Thursday afternoon, second grade students were doing an art project in the lunchroom. They were making posters depicting a “recipe” for friendship: 1 gallon of nice, 2 gallons of love, plus some hugging, sharing and patience. Kids also spend time engaged in physical activity, a huge bonus in a borough known for its high rates of childhood obesity.

Montanez said she was in tears when she first heard the program was on the chopping block. It wasn’t just her job that was at stake, she said. “This is my baby,” she said. “I live here (in the area). This is our family. We’re basically second parents to these kids.”

Editor’s note: *A version of this story in the May 17-30 print edition of the Norwood News.*

<http://www.norwoodnews.org/id=7750&story=vital-bronx-after-school-programs-on-the-chopping-block/>

Huffington Post: Bloomberg's Budget Cuts And The After-School Crisis

By Saki Knafo

05/18/2012



Students protests Bloomberg's budget cuts at a University Settlement after-school program.

Some of the poems were about love and some were about clouds, but what really mattered about the P.S. 63 poetry reading on Wednesday night was the time.

A decade ago most of the 8- and 9- and 10-year-old poets in attendance might have been home playing video games or getting into trouble or doing nothing at all. But that was before New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's administration built the country's largest after-school system -- a system that critics say the mayor is now about to dismantle.

Two weeks ago, Bloomberg reduced the current budget for after-school and early-childhood services by \$70 million. According to advocates for those programs and city council members, he would need to restore those funds and an additional \$100 million to keep the programs open come September. Without funding, after-school programs could lose seats for 31,800 children. Advocates are hoping the city will restore some of the money by the time the city council passes the final budget in June.

In the meantime, teachers, administrators, and parents citywide are worrying what those losses might mean to students, their families and neighborhoods.

At P.S. 63 on New York's Lower East Side, after-school worker Angel Alvarado, 20, offered one possibility. Asked if he sees a difference between students who attend after-school programs and those who don't, he offered this response. "I know somebody from childhood personally who didn't go to after-school and now he's no longer with us. He went the route of the streets. So yes, there's a difference."

While that might be the worst-case scenario, plenty of data support the common-sense notion that teens are most likely to commit crimes, fall victim to crimes, drink or do drugs between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., the hours after they get out of school and before their parents get home from work. [Studies demonstrate](#) that after-school programs keep kids safer, and that kids who participate in those programs fare better in school than those that don't attend.

Not all after-school programs are equal, however. As one advocacy group put in a paper on the subject, "[Quality matters](#)."

And that may explain why, seven years ago, Bloomberg became one of the country's most prominent champions of high-quality after-school programs by starting Out-of-School Time, or OST, a citywide after-school system in which individual providers are required to help students meet specific educational, social, and nutritional goals. Alumni of New York's after-school programs in the '80s and '90s might be surprised by what they'd find at a typical after-school activity today. Gone are the unstructured afternoons of apple-juice and freeze-tag. At P.S. 63, part of the afternoon is devoted to homework help, and the rest to hands-on educational activities organized around a specific theme.

The theme changes daily: Mondays are for science projects, Tuesdays are for team-building, and so on. After-school workers now receive at least 30 hours of training each year, and often confer with "day-school" teachers at the beginning of their shifts. Many, like Alvarado, started out as students in the after-school programs where they now work, and hope to become full-time teachers themselves.

The blue-shirted staff members at P.S. 63 are employed by University Settlement, a group that has been running after-school programs of one kind or another since the Mayor William Russell Grace administration in the 1880s. Established in 1886, University Settlement is one of the country's oldest community organizations, an outgrowth of the settlement movement that began in England during the industrial revolution and the dawn of urban poverty.

When families on the Lower East Side didn't have showers, University Settlement ran a public bath; when residents mainly spoke Yiddish and Italian, it offered English classes. It's hard to say exactly when the group began calling its after-school programs "after-school," but it was among the first to embrace the mayor's push for quality in the mid-2000s.

Michael Zisser, the head of the group, said of the six city-funded programs run by University Settlement, only two have received funding for next year. The program could lose slots for more than 400 children.

Many advocates, like Zisser, find the cuts puzzling. "Why would a mayor who emphasized education essentially choose to eliminate three hours of the day?" said Zisser.

[Just this month](#), the mayor and his education chief, Dennis Walcott, joined a coalition of advocates and elected officials calling for schools around the country to add more classroom hours. "This is what we do," said Amy Mereson, a University Settlement director. "And yet we don't have the money."

In a statement to the Huffington Post, Samantha Levine, a spokesperson for the mayor, cited the "fiscal realities" that have shriveled municipal budgets nationwide since the start of the recession. But many advocates retort that the city's economy is healthier than it's been in years, and that its after-school programs are important not just to students but to the city's current economy.

If the cuts go through, University Settlement could lose up to 45 jobs filled by low-income young people who live and spend money in the neighborhoods where the group offers programs. "We bring up young people from the community, we train the hell out of them," said Mereson. "This is hugely important from an economic perspective."

And then there's the perspective of the parents. Darlene Rodriguez, a young mother with two girls in the University Settlement program, stood in the back of the auditorium Wednesday night while a young poet talked about clouds.

"I'm a student, my husband works," she said. If the program closes, she said, she'd have to stop going to school. "There's no one I could leave my kids with. My family lives in Florida."

Read More Here: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/18/bloombergs-budget-after-school-programs_n_1525835.html?ref=mostpopular

City plans to close dozens of after-school programs across Brooklyn

Brooklyn could lose half of the borough's 177 after-school programs

By Erin Durkin



Todd Maisel/New York Daily News

Hundreds of parents, children and community leaders from the Cypress Hill Local Development Corporation demonstrate against budget cuts to after-school programs.

The city is set to close dozens of Brooklyn after-school programs, angering working parents who say there's nowhere else for their kids to go.

Brooklyn is slated to lose 77 of its 154 Out of School Time programs in the fall, the most programs axed in any borough.

Angela Francis, 38, of Bedford Stuyvesant, said she's able to keep her job at a drug store because four of her kids can spend after school hours at P.S. 34 on Norman Ave.

Without it, she'd have to quit or drastically scale back her hours. "I'm able to work, and so is my husband. Both of us need to work, or we can't make ends meet," she said. "We're all working parents. A lot of us just depend on the after school program."

She's one of many parents who say they will have to give up jobs or school if the programs close. In a survey of Brooklyn parents by the NYC Campaign for Children, 32% said they would quit a job or educational opportunity, while 28% would leave kids alone.

The Bloomberg administration's proposed budget cuts funding for the OST program from \$91.5 million to \$73.3 million, with 23,838 of 52,567 kids losing their seats.

Advocates estimate 10,000 of the slashed seats are in Brooklyn.

The City Council could opt to restore some funding, but the program has already shrunk from a high of almost 90,000 kids in 2008.

Department of Youth and Community Development spokeswoman Cathleen Collins said so many programs had to be axed because besides the budget cut, the cost per kid has jumped. She said officials focused on keeping programs in "high need areas" with many kids in poverty and English Language Learners.

"It's devastating us," said Lai-Wan Wong, director of youth and education programs at St. Nicks Alliance, which is slated to have three of its four OST programs shut, including the one at P.S. 34.

"The problem is the pie is so small that putting one program per zipcode is a drop in the bucket...We turn away families all the time."

Wanda Andreu, 36, of Williamsburg, said her 7-year-old son Justin was crushed when he found out his program would close. "My son took his piggy bank and took \$5 and gave it to the director the next day and said, 'Here, please, this is to help keep the after school program open,'" she said.

She said she'd have to give up her job as an office manager. "It would be a hardship for my family," she said.

Most of the axed programs are for elementary school, while others are for middle school, where participants worry about unsupervised kids getting into trouble. "I definitely know that my kids will be more involved in gang activity. They're recruiting them during dismissal," said Larry Acosta, director of the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation's program at I.S. 171.

Parents and students have staged protests, conducting their arts and recreation programs out in the street to dramatize the cuts.

"This is my last resort," said Ayisha Lawrence, 36, whose 7-year-old daughter goes to Cypress Hills' program at P.S. 65 on Jamaica Ave. "I don't have a backup."

Read more: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/brooklyn/city-plans-close-dozens-after-school-programs-brooklyn-article-1.1080803#ixzz1vXmyXojJ>



City Child Care Plans Debated In Council Budget Hearings

By: Grace Rauh

05/22/2012



City budget discussions got heated Tuesday over Council concerns about 36,000 child care positions and the city's new Early Learn program. NY1's Grace Rauh filed this report.

Even before city commissioners landed in the hot seat in the City Council chamber, the fight over Mayor Bloomberg's proposed budget cuts was playing out on the steps of City Hall.

"Child care is the underpinning for any kind of economic stability, along with housing," said Lisa Caswell of the Day Care Council of New York. "If you take away the child care, you not only deprive the child, you put the child at risk, but you primarily destabilize the whole family. It's obvious."

36,000 positions in child care programs are on the budget chopping block. Council members demanded to know what parents are supposed to do when they have to work and they have no child care.

"I am obviously troubled by where we sit today and would like to be in a different place," said Ronald Richter, the commissioner for the Administration for Children's Services.

"In one of the richest cities in the world, we can't take care of our children," said Councilwoman Margaret Chin of Manhattan. "That is a shame for all of us. And the mayor has the money. And he's telling us he is balancing this budget and he's not raising taxes? Well he is raising taxes on the poor and working families."

The child care cuts are not the only source of contention. The city also provoked a backlash from the council over its efforts to improve early education and child care to young New Yorkers. It has launched a new program, known as Early Learn.

Some veteran child care operators failed to win contracts for the new program. Critics charge that the local centers are being passed over in favor of ones that have no ties to the local community.

"Why did you do this?" said Councilman Domenic Recchia of Brooklyn. "That is the question."

In all likelihood some of the cuts members are most upset by will end up being restored with City Council money. In the meantime, budget negotiations will last for another few weeks. A final budget deal must be in place by the end of June.

http://www.nyl.com/content/news_beats/political_news/161730/city-child-care-plans-debated-in-council-budget-hearings

City's Child Care Facing One-Two Punch

By Kristen Meriwether

May 22, 2012



NEW YORK—The parents of 10,800 children are in jeopardy of losing their subsidized child care as early as the end of June due to a one-two punch of budget shortfalls and a change in how the city's Administration for Children's Services (ACS) subsidizes child care programs.

"This seems to be a pattern every year, where it is on the council to do extraordinary things to restore what ought to be ACS's obligation," City Council member Stephen Levin said during the executive budget hearings at City Hall on Tuesday.

While similar shortfalls have been filled in the past, such deep cuts this year could be exceptionally difficult to fill.

Levin noted the \$84 million proposed budget reduction from last year in the ACS budget while other departments had increases in their budgets.

"Why on earth do we decrease the budget so drastically for our youngest children?" asked Levin.

Ronald Richter, commissioner of the New York City ACS, explained 6,500 spots in city-funded centers would lose their funding unless a \$71.5 million shortfall is filled.

In addition, 4,300 vouchers, which allow parents to receive subsidized child care at non-city funded centers, would also lose their funding unless an \$11.8 million shortfall was filled.

When asked what parents are supposed to do with their children, who no longer have subsidized child care, when they go to work, Richter replied, “We, for families who are losing ACS, are going to work with them to try to answer person by person that question. We will obviously, based on what you are looking at, not have a satisfactory answer for each individual and that is painful.”



An empty toddlers' classroom at the day care center of 242 Hoyt St., in Brooklyn on May 22.
(Benjamin Chasteen/The Epoch Times)

Not Just a Number

These cuts in services will affect more than just numbers on a spreadsheet.

“The children are just like a piece of data, just a piece of quantitative stuff. They are not thinking about the qualitative impact,” said Joan Morris, director of Bethel Day Care Center in Brooklyn.

Her center, which has been providing care for the underserved for 40 years, is one of many on the chopping block under ACS’s new Early Learn program.

Morris was one of the 282 centers that submitted proposals for the new Early Learn program—149 were approved. Proposals were judged with the following criteria: 40 percent for approach, 40 percent level for organizational capability, and 20 percent on quantity and quality of successful relevant experience.

Despite the fact that she had not changed her curriculum, which had received funding approval the previous year under the old system, Morris said she scored 75 percent based on the new criteria and was notified she would no longer have funding after June 30.

“Where will I put the children? I have nowhere to put the children,” she said.

She recently received a letter from the ACS claiming the closing date had been moved to Nov. 5, only to receive an email a few days ago saying the letter was erroneous and that June 30 is the correct date.

Morris said parents are holding out hope, but remain in limbo, just like her.

“Summer is coming up. Where are they going to put their kids during this time? Leave them at home? Take them to unlicensed providers?” she said.

Council member Levin pointed out that confusion in closure dates results in a lack of planning. Centers awarded the new contracts under Early Learn are set to take over on Oct. 1 however, the outgoing centers have been told to close by June 30.

“This is actually a logistical nightmare going on right now,” Levin said.

Richter was not given a chance to respond.

“I am not going to allow for the timing of these processes to essentially be a death sentence for these programs that have all been around for 40 years. They are institutions in the neighborhood,” Levin said, speaking specifically about seven centers in his district, the 33rd District in Brooklyn.

For Morris, it is more than just policies and programs, formalities and funding. When asked what she would tell the department responsible for making budget cuts Morris replied, “I would let him know that children’s life and the life of families transcend the monetary data that they are using to judge and use to dictate the future and the life for these children. They are the future. They are the flame that is going to enlighten our world tomorrow.”

<http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/united-states/citys-child-care-facing-one-two-punch-241251.html>



New York Council Budget Hearings Heat Up With Issues Of Childcare Cuts

Laura Vladimirova

May 23rd, 2012

Mayor Michael Bloomberg's proposed budget cuts to city childcare programs caused a stir during budget negotiation hearings held on Tuesday.

"Child care is the underpinning for any kind of economic stability, along with housing," said Lisa Caswell of the Day Care Council of New York as reported by NY1. "If you take away the child care, you not only deprive the child, you put the child at risk, but you primarily destabilize the whole family. It's obvious."

About 36,000 positions for young kids in need of child care programs are set to be cut from this year's city budget.

City Council members also brought up another issue, the Early Learn program. The Early Learn program is the city's effort to provide early education initiatives. However, in many communities, the administration forced centers currently under contracts to reapply. Further, many local child care providers did not even receive governmental contracts in favor of centers that have no ties to the local communities.

"Why did you do this?" said local Councilman Domenic Recchia. "That is the question."

Council Member Margaret Chin of Manhattan made her point loud and clear, "In one of the richest cities in the world, we can't take care of our children," she said. "That is a shame for all of us. And the mayor has the money. And he's telling us he is balancing this budget and he's not raising taxes? Well he is raising taxes on the poor and working families."

While debates may continue for a few weeks longer, a final budget deal must be brokered by the end of June.

<http://www.bensonhurstbean.com/2012/05/new-york-council-budget-hearings-heat-up-with-issues-of-childcare-cuts/>

Planned day care cuts would leave hundreds of children home alone: survey

Exclusive: Advocates say Mayor Bloomberg's budget cuts would slash 47,000 slots in after-school programs

Tina Moore



Mark Bonifacio/New York Daily News

Geraldann Grubb, with son Josiah, says she'd have to quit job if day care is cut.

Proposed cuts to city funding for after-school programs would leave hundreds of children home alone after the final bell sounds, a survey released to the Daily News found.

Nearly 16% of 3,336 parents surveyed by a group that is fighting Mayor Bloomberg's budget proposal said their children would return to empty homes if the cuts survive budget negotiations. Another 36% of parents polled by the Campaign for Children — an umbrella group of advocates and care providers — said they would have no choice but to quit their jobs.

"I can't afford to pay somebody to watch my daughter after school," said single mother Geraldann Grubb, 28, whose 8-year-old, Alisha, is in an after-school program at the United Community Centers in Brooklyn; her 4-year-old son, Josiah, is in day care there. "It's at the point now, I may have to quit."

Advocates say Bloomberg's budget plan would eliminate 47,000 slots in after-school programs and day care, but administration officials argue the number is closer to 40,000.

The same survey found that almost half of 1,117 parents whose children are in city-funded day care said the cuts would leave them in jeopardy of being forced to surrender their jobs.

The United Community Centers expects to halt services in September if the funding is lost.

A similar fate could be in store for an East Harlem provider that Ibrahim Ousman, 45, relies on for day care for his 3-year-old and for after-school services for his two other children.

“If they’re closing, it means I have to stop working,” Ousman, a single father who works for Cablevision, said. “I am the sole provider. If I don’t have a job, it means I cannot support them.”

Desperate for help, Ousman, who immigrated from Togo in 1992, said he has been calling his local City Council member and sending letters to Bloomberg and to the White House.

The mayor and the Council have until June 30 to deliver a budget deal. Bloomberg’s \$68.7 billion budget proposal also seeks to close 20 fire companies and slash \$74 million from libraries and \$41 million from cultural programs.

Of the total number of parents surveyed by the Campaign for Children, 64% said they have yet to come up with a contingency plan if the cuts take effect.

Themetris Kennebrew, 42, of the Bronx, said she doesn’t know what she would do if she quit her minimum-wage security job — but the possible alternative is not acceptable.

“Some parents will let their kids come home alone — not me,” said Kennebrew, whose 12-year-old son gets homework assistance, college prep and soccer lessons at an after-school program at M.S. 118 in the Bronx.

“He wants to be a little independent, but I think it’s just too risky.”

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<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/planned-day-care-cuts-leave-hundreds-children-home-survey-article-1.1083624#ixzz1vo7851Zq>



The Call Blog: Children Deliver Letters To Save Child Care, After-School Programs

By: NY1 News

05/23/2012

47,000 children stand to lose their slots in daycare and after-school programs if these cuts go through and many of our viewers are concerned. In our snap poll tonight, 40% of you said you are directly affected by these cuts, with an additional 47% saying that even though you aren't affected, you are still concerned. We'll see if the message gets through to City Hall - until then, we are likely to see a lot more rallies like today's.

One day after City Council lawmakers debated proposed budget cuts to after-school and child care programs, children delivered petitions to City Hall protesting the plan. Advocates say more than 47,000 children are at risk of losing access to these taxpayer-subsidized programs, unless \$170 million is restored to Mayor Bloomberg's proposed budget.

A final decision must be made before the budget is due at the end of June. Many parents are concerned about how they will be able to continue to go to work if affordable child care isn't an option. Do you support their fight to restore funding?

Should the Council restore \$170 million to prevent child care and after-school program cuts? Will rallies and petition drives make a difference in influencing the current crop of elected officials? If the cuts go through, how would your family be affected?

http://www.ny1.com/content/the_call/the_call_blog/161790/the-call-blog--children-deliver-letters-to-save-child-care--after-school-programs

Greenpoint Vows to Fight Bloomberg's After School Cuts

Nick Powell

May 23, 2012

Budget cuts to after school programs across the city have left local school administrators and parents demanding answers. But as the Bloomberg administration remained tight-lipped, Councilmember Steve Levin hammered away at the Mayor for tightening the purse strings on a critical city service.

"It shows the callousness, at times, of the Bloomberg administration," said Levin. "We're the wealthiest city in the country with a budget of close to \$70 billion and a Department of Education that has a \$24 billion budget. How can it be that we do not place after school as a priority in our neighborhoods?"



The Bloomberg administration is proposing a budget cut of \$18.2 million for Out of School Time programs, which currently serve over 50,000 students in New York City. This would leave roughly 24,000 students without after school care. Brooklyn will bear the brunt of the cuts, with 77 of the 154 OST programs slated for the chopping block.

The prospect of losing much-needed after school care has left some parents in a panic. Dawn Garcia, the mother of a child at PS 34 on Norman Avenue, said she would do whatever it takes to keep her son's after school program operational.

"I'm a single mother and my support system is this program," said Garcia. "I go to school, I have a full-time job. For people like me who don't have babysitters, it's very important. We've got to fight for it, if that's what it takes."



John Galvin, an assistant principal at IS 318, found it ironic that a week after Mayor Bloomberg congratulated and posed for photos with the school's chess team after they won the National High School Chess Championship, their program was deemed disposable.

"Our program was good enough to be thanked by the mayor personally at City Hall and to recognize what an achievement the kids had accomplished," said Galvin. "To find out a week later that the budget axe had fallen on our program was pretty cruel."

Education advocates say that the OST budget cuts imposed in the city mirror those on the federal level, and many feel that local and state governments are pinching pennies where they are needed most: for the educational future of the next generation.

"The value of the after school experience has clearly been demonstrated, both in terms of children's academic performance and the ability to allow parents to work and provide support for their families," said Michael Rochford, Executive Director of the St. Nick's Alliance.

Levin has vowed to bring the fight to the Mayor's doorstep as the city prepares its budget for the coming fiscal year. He anticipates that the City Council will be unified in their support to continue funding for OST.

"This is the number one priority for the City Council this budget year," said Levin. "Things are going to heat up in the next month, and I'm going to fight as hard as I can to make sure these programs are restored, one hundred percent."

<http://www.greenpointnews.com/news/4524/greenpoint-vows-to-fight-bloombergs-after-school-cuts>

Day Cares Raise Plight at City Hall

By Amelia Pang

May 23, 2012



Council member Charles Barron speaks at a protest against the mayor's scheduled cuts for subsidized child care and the Head Start program on the steps of City Hall on May 23. (Benjamin Chasteen/The Epoch Times)

NEW YORK—A little girl in pigtails stands beside a small boy, both holding colorful petition letters beautifully decorated with crayons.

The letters are a symbol of the 5,000-plus letters written by young day care attendees. The children delivered the petitions to City Hall on Wednesday morning to protest the mayor's scheduled cuts for subsidized child care and Head Start programs.

"If these kids have no where to go, then people are going to stop working to look after them. If people stop working, they're going to go on welfare," said Joyce McClammy, who works at day care center Local 205. "Didn't you say you want to get people off of welfare, Mayor Bloomberg?"

Among the group of protesters stood Lijung Chan, an assistant teacher at the Chung Pak Day Care, located on Walker St. in Chinatown.

She said a colleague of hers had a student whose parents went to register their children at the local preschool center after receiving news about the cuts. The response was, "Honey, we only have two slots open and 2,000 have been coming in to apply for that slot."

"This is an example of how the public child care is not even enough to begin with, and now they are cutting more," Chan said.

The Chung Pak Day Care is a part of the Chinese-American Planning Council.

Under the proposed budget cuts, the government will stop funding for the child care division of the Chinese-American Planning Council. Chan said her day care will be forced to close as a result. At least four major Chinatown day care centers will close, according to David Chen, executive director of the Chinese-American Planning Council.

“Let me illustrate to you what kind of kids we take care of,” Chan said. The center looks after a boy who wears his sister’s hand-me-down pants, a child who spends his nights at homeless shelters with his mother to avoid his abusive father, and the child of a mother who works six days a week because the father was in Iraq.

“It’s a matter of prioritization of spending,” said Charles Barron, a NYC council member.

“How come we can build Yankee stadiums, and we have money for the Mets to build an arena, but we’re shutting down senior centers and day care centers?” he said.

“This seems to be a pattern every year, where it is on the council to do extraordinary things to restore what ought to be ACS’s [New York City Administration for Children’s Services] obligation,” City Council member Stephen Levin said during the executive budget hearings at City Hall on Tuesday.

The mayor outlined a plan that achieves a balanced budget—closing a \$2 billion budget gap without tax increases. A balanced budget will be finalized on June 30.

<http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/united-states/day-cares-raise-plaint-at-city-hall-241693.html>



Queens' Largest Weekly Community Newspaper Group

Students protest plan to cut youth programs



Photo by Anna Gustafson

Students gather at JHS 190 in Forest Hills this week to protest Mayor Bloomberg's proposal to cut funding for after-school programs across the city.

[by Anna Gustafson](#)

Thursday, May 24, 2012

After finding out that her 9-year-old daughter's after-school program in Jamaica may be closed this summer because of Mayor Bloomberg's proposed budget cuts, Janet Guerrero has spent many sleepless nights wondering what she will do if the site is shuttered.

"I don't have many choices," Guerrero said. "I work full-time in Manhattan to pay the mortgage, to support my family."

Guerrero was one of dozens of parents and students who crowded into the auditorium at JHS 190 in Forest Hills on Tuesday evening to attend a protest sponsored by Queens Community House and urge the mayor to rethink his plan to cut youth programs, which, if approved by the City Council, could slash the number of after-school opportunities in Queens by 40 percent. Among those that may be shuttered include an after-school spot at PS 82 in Jamaica, where Guerrero's daughter, Janel, goes; the Beacon program at JHS 190, and others sites in public housing developments around Forest Hills and Pomonok—all of which are run by the Queens Community House, which is based in Forest Hills but operates programs around the borough.

“Every day I come to this wonderful program,” said Nicole Kitiashwili, 12, of Rego Park, who attends the Beacon at JHS 190. “Where else are kids like me going to go if it closes? We can’t all go home, and the paid programs are too expensive for working parents.”

Because of proposed cuts to the city Department of Youth and Community Development Bloomberg has outlined in his preliminary budget, what are known as Out of School Time programs would shrink from 83 to 51 sites in Queens. The cuts to the free after-school programs, which would have to be approved by the City Council to be implemented, would impact thousands of Queens students from all corners of the borough.

Besides the Beacon in Forest Hills, the mayor has also called to shutter a Beacon at MS 158 in Bayside.

Representatives from the offices of Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi (D-Forest Hills), Councilwoman Karen Koslowitz (D-Forest Hills) and Assemblywoman Grace Meng (D-Flushing) said they are fighting to ensure that funding is restored for youth programming.

“It is unacceptable they’re thinking of closing these programs,” said Alex Schnell, communications director for Hevesi.

Schnell noted that the mayor’s administration selected which Beacons to close based on Zip codes — meaning wealthier areas like Forest Hills are targeted, despite the fact that the program at JHS 190 serves low-income students from throughout the borough.

“I may have to quit my job because of this,” said Christine Ferreira, a Rego Park mother whose two sons attend the JHS 190 site. “I just don’t feel it’s safe for children after school right now. It’s a peace of mind for working parents, knowing their children are here.”

Jamaica resident Elaina Feliciano, whose son, Justin Sanchez, attends the PS 82 program, reiterated Ferreira’s concerns, citing the case of Leiby Kletzky, a Brooklyn boy who was murdered after being kidnapped while walking home from day camp last July.

“Do you want to see children walking home alone, sitting home alone after that?” Feliciano asked.

http://www.qchron.com/editions/queenswide/students-protest-plan-to-cut-youth-programs/article_bc0b9562-c65d-5bd6-87c4-5e824b6d5bcb.html

Thursday, 24 May 2012

Most of the current advocacy concerning NYC's Out-of-School Time (OST) and EarlyLearn NYC programs has focused on the significant cuts to service capacity that will be imposed by Mayor Michael Bloomberg's proposed budget for FY2012-13. With OST being cut by close to half and a total of more than 47,000 children losing either after-school or subsidized early childhood programs, that makes sense. At the same time, however, it is increasingly clear that a massive realignment of the service delivery systems for these two programs resulting from citywide and system-wide procurement processes – i.e. who will be providing OST and EarlyLearn services in which locations and for whom – is making a very bad budget picture seem significantly worse.

Recently announced recommendations for new contract awards for both OST and EarlyLearn show massive turnover in provider selections and program locations. To some degree, this realignment was clearly intentional. EarlyLearn, itself, is an entirely new service model which combines ACS-contracted day care, Head Start and Universal Pre-K programs in a blended new program, one that replaces prior individual contracts for these services. In addition, both EarlyLearn and OST procurements were also vehicles for reallocation of funding towards targeted communities believed to have the highest needs for services based on zip code demographics.

Nevertheless, the RFP results appear to have gone far beyond what many advocates and providers could have imagined.

Out-of-School Time

The recently announced contract award recommendations for elementary and middle school OST programs resulted in a net loss of 172 programs, a staggering 43% reduction in the total program capacity. Those program losses, say advocates, are a direct result of the Mayor's budget proposals. In reality, however, many more existing elementary and middle school programs – 301 out of the total 396 programs currently in operation -- will be closing next year.

Why?

Competition for the new OST contracts was extremely intense – with as many as ten proposals reportedly being submitted for every new contract ultimately recommended. Many existing providers took advantage of the RFP as an expansion opportunity to apply for new programs. Ultimately, approximately 40 existing providers were successful in winning more than 90 new programs. Agencies which had not previously operated OST programs also used this as their opportunity to get into the field. Approximately 30 contract awards have been recommended for more than 20 brand new OST provider agencies. In total, despite the 43% reduction in the overall number programs being funded, DYCD recommended contract awards for a total of 123 new programs. As a consequence, the actual number of existing programs which will be closing this fall to make way for budget cuts and new providers is 301 – or approximately 75% of all existing programs.

Many current youth services provider agencies, therefore, are seeing their OST contracts end -- often for all

or several of their programs. It appears that more than 60 separate agencies will lose all of their OST contracts. While many of these operated only a single program, many others were well-known agencies operating multiple programs and multiple sites.

In other cases, agencies will be required to close multiple existing programs, while simultaneously opening several new ones.

Sports and Arts in Schools Foundation is an interesting case in point. The agency reportedly had been the largest OST provider with a total of 24 programs. It appears that Sports and Arts will once again hold that leading position under the new contract award recommendations, although with just 19 programs. How it got from there to here, however, is complicated. The agency actually kept only 6 of its existing programs. It will be forced to close 18 others. On the other hand, it was awarded 13 entirely new programs to set up and operate. One of the programs slated to close is at IS 318 whose national championship chess team is featured in the new documentary film "Brooklyn Castle." In April, the team visited City Hall and was congratulated by the Mayor – just weeks before the decision to close that particular program was announced.

Good Shepherd Services which had been operating 11 programs – including three previously run by Groundwork with which it recently affiliated – will now be running 12. However, only five of its existing programs will continue. The agency will be forced to close six programs while simultaneously opening seven new ones in other locations and communities.

SCAN-NY will be closing six programs. "We have been working in these very high need schools for years and years," says SCAN Executive Director Lew Zuchman. "Meanwhile, we got another program in an entirely new school."

All this programmatic hopscotch is likely to spread the impact of budget cuts and program closings across a far larger number of children and families, say advocates. Afterschool arrangements that working parents depend upon are being disrupted at all 301 programs being closed, they argue, not just at the 172 programs being lost on a net basis.

EarlyLearn

ACS' selections for EarlyLearn contracts also sent shockwaves through the early childhood community. The approximate 450 contract recommendations represented a dramatic realignment of the provider network.

Many long-standing and seemingly high quality day care providers lost some or all of their programs. It is estimated that almost half of the membership of the Day Care Council, which represents ACS contracted centers, were not recommended for an EarlyLearn contract. Smaller stand alone centers were decimated. The same was true for a surprising number of larger, well-established, multi-site providers.

Family Child Care networks saw a particularly large level of provider turnover. Several large and highly regarded programs – Jewish Child Care Association, Catholic Guardian Society and Home Bureau, New York Foundling and others – were not recommended for EarlyLearn contracts. Much of this turnover appears to have resulted from ACS' stated preference that Family Child Care networks be affiliated with a center-based program. As a result, the total number of Family Child Care network contracts was cut by more than half from over 50 to 25. And, close to half of those selected had not previously run ACS-funded Family Child Care networks.

Some observers questioned the likelihood that new providers will quickly be able to assemble and develop systems to adequately monitor and supervise sprawling networks of DOH licensed Family Child Care

providers caring for infants and toddlers in their own homes. “It’s not like running a center,” said one nonprofit executive with experience in the field.

Many center-based providers who were not recommended for awards – yet feel that they have proven high quality programs – question the basis of ACS’ decisions. Surprisingly, close to half of programs which had achieved accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) – a major quality benchmark – were not selected for contract awards.

As a result, many agencies are now seeking to appeal ACS’ decision. As of late last week, providers were submitting requests for detailed debriefings to learn the rationale for ACS’ decisions and beginning a formal appeal process.

“Emotions are running very high,” says Andrea Anthony, Executive Director of the Day Care Council.

ACS did not respond to NYNP requests for comments regarding concerns raised by providers and advocates relating to the RFP process and contract award recommendations.

Who Are Those Guys?

As always, attention was equally focused on who got contracts. Agencies with histories as Head Start providers appeared to fare better than those with just ACS Day Care experience.

One name – BAbove Worldwide Institute, Inc. – appeared again and again on the list of selected agencies, receiving more than 40 separate contract award recommendations for center-based programs as well as a 400-slot Family Child Care network. In all, BAbove was recommended for 3,500 slots, approximately 8% of the entire system-wide capacity.

Surprisingly, many in the early childhood services community were unfamiliar with the agency which appeared to have been recommended for the largest number of EarlyLearn program slots.

In fact, BAbove is a major provider of Head Start services. “We have been running Head Start since 1992,” says Rabbi Eleizer Vogel, the agency’s Director. “We have approximately 20 sites in Brooklyn and Queens and serve approximately 1,000 children.” BAbove also has a contract for Early Head Start and Universal Pre-Kindergarten.

While BAbove is a religious corporation, its services are completely non-sectarian, Vogel explains. “Our programs are multi-cultural and multi-racial. Our staff speak nine different languages which represent the different communities we serve.”

Much of BAbove’s previous Head Start expansion had come through a “partnership” model in which BAbove provided Head Start wrap around services, support and supervision for individual pre-schools. Several of these are in parochial schools, says Vogel who again emphasizes that the programs are nonsectarian, citing individual programs affiliated with several different religious and ethnic groups.

Among the pre-schools with which BAbove has partnered to provide Head Start services is All My Children Day Care and Nursery School, a group which itself received approximately 15 separate EarlyLearn contract awards to serve roughly 1,400 children. The apparent connection raised questions for some observers. There is no corporate relationship between the two entities, says Vogel. “We are happy for them and very pleased that, after working with us over the last few years, they are now capable of winning a City contract of their own.”

Vogel is confident that BAbove will be able to make the leap from its current Head Start programs with

1,000 children to more than 40 new EarlyLearn programs for 3,500 children. “We have developed systems that work very well and are capable of administering complex Head Start regulations,” he says. “There is tremendous need for services. We are really excited about being able to expand our program to meet that need.”

<http://www.nynp.biz/index.php/breaking-news/10493-ost-aearylearn-rfps-make-bad-budgets-seem-worse>



Bloomberg's Budget Cuts Brooklyn's After-School Programs in Half

By John Surico Sun., May 20 2012 at 10:08 AM

As of now, the Out of School Time program reaches 154 schools in Brooklyn. According to its website, it offers "a mix of academic, recreational and cultural activities for young people (grades K-12) after school" and is free of charge. It's also a relief to parents who work longer hours and rely on the program to watch over their children into the evening.

But, according to a new report out by *The Daily News*, it looks like almost 10,000 kids in Brooklyn who participate in the program are out of luck this fall.

The OST program houses 52,567 students every weekday city-wide. This number will be halved once the budget cuts from Bloomberg's administration are installed. Here's the data: this year, the budget was \$91.5 million; next time school is in session, the funds will have dropped to \$73.3 million. Instead of 154 programs, Brooklyn will be left with 77 overloaded OST's, pushing 10,000 kids out of the program. And none of the parents involved are too happy about it.

Before the financial crisis in 2008 and the onslaught of recession austerity in municipalities, the OST program was riding high with 90,000 kids in its ranks. Consistently each year, its funds and size are being trimmed in the wake of budget shortfalls.

Except this academic shortfall leads to another shortfall: once after-school evaporates into thin air, the employment livelihoods of the students' parents are put into play as well. As mentioned before, the two run parallel to each other; hence why parents were out in protest of the cut just a few weeks ago.

The *News* report references a poll conducted by the NYC Campaign for Children with Brooklyn parents. The results do not look good: 32% of them will now have to *leave* a job or educational opportunity because of Bloomberg's new budget while 28% said they would simply leave the kids alone once school gets out.

The City Council has the ability to re-instate the funds but, with the unfortunate trend of downward decline in the education sector, it doesn't look like it'll happen. And that is a damn shame.

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http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninscared/2012/05/bloombergs_budg.php

Children rally to save Pomonok after-school program from shutting down

By Sarah Yu

Wednesday, May 23rd, 2012



Children, parents and politicians rallied recently against the closing of after-school programs at the Pomonok Center at the Queens Community House.

The center offers a free after-school program for children from grades kindergarten to sixth that includes homework help, arts and crafts, fitness, character development and team-building games.

“I worry that without such a program in Pomonok, our youth will begin to fall behind academically and socially, which is something we as a community simply cannot afford,” said Assemblymember Michael Simanowitz.

The Pomonok Center is funded by the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development’s Out-of-School Time Program, which had its funding cut in Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s executive budget.

“I call on the city to stop balancing the budget on the backs of our children and young families,” Simanowitz said.

According to Sheena Sukhraj, the youth services director for the Pomonok Center, they are currently collecting petitions and sending it out to the mayor and local officials.

“I think it’s a shame because the majority of our children come from Pomonok Houses which is a low-income housing development, so we know that the parents can’t afford after-school programming,” she said.

They only have six more weeks to fight to keep the after school programs running at the Pomonok Center.

“I’m very devastated because it is right now the only option that I have for child care for my son,” Kimberlee Farrell, a parent and educator said.

Farrell added that she’s always looking for options so that she is ready to face what might happen if their protests aren’t heard.

“I’m touched,” she said. “It takes major issues to bring it out in these communities, but you see from these children, six and seven years old, up to the adults — 50s, 60s 70-year old grandparents — all rallying together for what is right.”

<http://queenscourier.com/2012/children-rally-to-save-pomonok-after-school-program-from-shutting-down/>

Afterschool Options on the Cutting Board in Brooklyn

Will this mean fewer work hours for parents, or will more idle young hands become the devil's playground?

C. Zawadi Morris

May 22, 2012

It looks like budget cuts are taking aim at a new target: afterschool programs.

The city announced late last week that it planned to close at least half of the after school programs in Brooklyn, reducing the number from 154, down to 77 by fall, according to a Daily News report.

Many working mothers fear the cutback will force them to make a choice between either quitting their jobs, which extend well past the time that school ends, scaling back their work hours, or leaving the kids at home by themselves.

In a survey of Brooklyn parents by the NYC Campaign for Children, 32 percent said they would quit a job or educational opportunity, while 28 percent said they would leave kids alone.

“I’m able to work, and so is my husband. Both of us need to work, or we can’t make ends meet,” said Angela Francis, 38, of Bedford Stuyvesant. Francis admitted, she's able to keep her job at a drug store because four of her kids can spend after school hours at P.S. 34 on Norman Ave. “We’re all working parents. A lot of us just depend on the after school program.”

Who was it that said, “Idle hands are the devil’s playground?” (H.G. Bohn in 1855).

And in Bed-Stuy -- the neighborhood hit hardest in New York City with unemployment—further cuts to services that would otherwise keep teens and young children busy almost certainly will pose far-reaching problems that will affect the entire community.

So what do you think will be the biggest impact of the city cutting 50 percent of the afterschool programs in Brooklyn? Take our poll, and tell us in the comments.

<http://bed-stuy.patch.com/articles/afterschool-options-on-the-cutting-board-in-brooklyn>

Bloomberg's Budget Cuts Could Cause Thousands Of New York City Parents To Quit Jobs: Survey

By Saki Knafo

05/24/2012

Thousands of New York City parents said they'd quit their jobs or leave their children home alone if they lost access to childcare and after-school programs, according to a new report by Campaign for Children, a coalition of local community organizations. The budget for 2013 proposed by Mayor Michael Bloomberg would eliminate after-school and childcare slots for more than 47,000 children. Advocates for children's services have been fighting the cuts since March, arguing that the effects would be devastating on families and the economy if the city government passes cuts in its final budget at the end of June.

The group's survey asked parents what they would do if they should lose after-school or childcare for their child. According to the report, more than half the parents who use childcare and more than a third with children in after-school programs said they'd quit their jobs to stay home with their kids; and 16 percent of parents with kids in after-school said they'd let their kids stay home alone. An additional 21 percent said they'd place their children with a relative.

Jennifer March-Joly, the head of the Citizens' Committee for Children and a member of the Campaign for Children, predicted that thousands of parents would turn to public assistance in order to provide for their children. "In worst case scenarios, families will become homeless or children will be separated from their parents," she said. "This can't be what New York City's leaders want for our communities."

Eslaynet Pena, a mother with two children in one of the after-school programs slated to lose funding, said she'd have to drop out of the graduate school program at Lehman College where she's studying for a master's degree in social work. That's the only way she'd be able to care for her kids, she said, and even then, she wouldn't be able to give them the sort of attention they get in their after-school program. "They have cooking, art, chorus," she said. "They get homework help. My daughter doesn't like to read, so they encourage her to read."

New York City's after-school system, known as Out-of-School Time, or OST, was established in 2005, with the purpose of helping to close the achievement gap. At the time it was introduced, Bloomberg was widely seen as one of the country's most outspoken proponents of after-school programs.

A spokesperson for the mayor's administration, Samantha Levine, says that "fiscal realities" have made the cuts necessary, and she points out that some of the cuts will come as part of a larger overhaul of the programs that could improve quality even as the number of students declines.

But many advocates remain baffled by the decision. "The results of this survey show the deeply troubling reality of what will happen to New York City if the cuts to childcare and after-school are not restored in the final city budget," said David Nocenti, the executive director of the community group Union Settlement. "This is a ripple effect that will harm our city's children, working families and economic stability."

Read More Here: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/24/bloomberg-budget-cuts-after-school-childcare_n_1543451.html

After-School Cuts Would Hit Hard

Programs slated for closure across city

By Zachary Stieber

May 25, 2012



Councilwoman Diana Reyna asks questions on Thursday at a Department of Youth and Community Development budget hearing. (Zachary Stieber/The Epoch Times)

NEW YORK—Parents quitting jobs. Latch-key kids. Increased crime. These are some of the more severe potential effects of proposed cuts to after-school programs, according to City Council members and advocates.

Total funds in the proposed fiscal year 2013 budget for youth services have dropped from \$329 million to \$244.8 million. The biggest cuts would be to Out-of-School Time, or after-school programs. In 2009, \$121 million from city, state, and federal sources paid for more than 75,000 slots; proposed funding for the upcoming budget has \$73 million funding 27,000 slots.

City funding alone would decrease from \$212 million to \$150 million if the proposed budget were to pass.

“These cuts are downright foolish, and every penny that we save on after-school programs today is not only a lost educational opportunity, it’s a lost economic opportunity—and it’s probably a cost to the criminal justice system down the road,” said Councilman Lewis A. Fidler, at a Thursday hearing on the issue.

In a report issued on Thursday by advocacy group Campaign For Children, based on a survey filled out by parents, 36 percent of parents (1,274) who responded said they would quit their job to stay home with their child or children if the proposed budget cuts to after-school programs are passed.

Out of the 4,000 responses, another 16 percent (576) would leave their child or children home alone, while 21 percent (749) would leave them with a relative.



Councilwomen Diana Reyna (L) and Letitia James ask questions on Thursday at a Department of Youth and Community Development budget hearing. (Zachary Stieber/The Epoch Times)

“We will restore this money, one way or another, together with the administration,” said Councilman Fidler. “We’re going to have to figure out how to do that so that every neighborhood in New York has after-school programs—ample after-school programs.”

The budget, first outlined by the mayor, must go through negotiations with the city council before getting passed by July 1. It must be balanced, with no debt.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s office declined to comment on the issue, deferring to the Department of Youth and Community Development, which had officials testify at the meeting.

“As you have reduced resources, you have to make tough decisions,” said Jeanne B. Mullgrav, commissioner of the department.

One after-school program, a chess program at a Brooklyn middle school, garnered attention in April after winning the National High School Chess Championship. They also previously won the National Junior High Chess Championship. After winning, the team from IS 318 met with the mayor and Department of Education chancellor Dennis Walcott. A few short weeks later, they were told their program would likely be cut.



The chess team from IS 318, a middle school in Brooklyn, won the National High School Chess Championship in April. The after-school program is one of many that would be cut if the current version of the proposed fiscal year 2013 budget is passed. (Courtesy of Elizabeth Spiegel)

“At the moment, we have no money at all for next year: nothing for after-school, Saturdays, or travel,” said Elizabeth Spiegel, team coach, via email. “I’m very sad that the program we have put so much work into building over the years is about to be gone, but it looks like it will be.”

The city also expects more than 131,000 applications to its Summer Youth Employment Program this year, but projects being able to accept only 30,000 applicants.

Youth Service Cuts

Fiscal Year 2012: \$329 million cut
Proposed FY 2013: \$244.8 million cut

After-school Programs, City Funding

Fiscal Year 2012: \$212 million cut
Proposed FY 2013 \$150 million cut

Slots

Fiscal Year 2010: Over 75,000 cut
Proposed FY 2013: 27,000 cut

2012 Summer Youth Employment

Expected Applicants: Over 131,000
Expected Accepted: 30,000

Having “tens of thousands of kids who have nothing to do will jeopardize public safety,” said Councilman Jumaane D. Williams.

“In each [police] precinct that I went to, the commanding officer sitting there knew exactly what it would mean to have two-thirds of the after-school programs in the city of New York close,” said Councilman Fidler.

The NYPD didn’t return an email requesting comment.

Council members told Mullgrav that she should go back to the mayor and demand more funding. Councilman Ydanis Rodriguez even said he would not pass the budget if the youth service cuts weren’t removed.

George Sweeting, deputy director of the Independent Budget Office, said during a phone interview that council members often threaten to not pass the budget. The only action they can take—other than finding cuts in other places or raising the property tax—is to prepare their own council budget and pass that instead of the mayor’s budget.

The last time that happened, in 1998, then-mayor Rudolph Giuliani “basically didn’t spend the money on the programs that the council wanted to fund, anyway,” said Sweeting. City agencies report to the mayor, so

the mayor's office could tell them not to go out and assign contracts. After that happened in 1998, and the issue was sent to court, Giuliani and the City Council reached their own agreement.

"It's never been really resolved how the council could force the mayor to spend money," said Sweeting. "They avoided having a final court decision."

Read More Here: <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/united-states/after-school-cuts-would-hit-hard-242350.html>

The New York Times

Curtailing a Service That Parents Depend On

MICHAEL WINERIP

May 27, 2012

Are Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and the City Council doing their traditional budget dance?



At P.S. 24, three students and one of their after-school counselors, Eric Torres, who himself once attended the program.



Students practicing yoga postures during an after-school program at Public School 24 in Brooklyn.

Every year, the mayor proposes cutting certain vital city programs and then, at the last minute, the City Council comes to the rescue by restoring at least some of the money.

Council members look like heroes and the mayor gets himself a point or two toward future favors.

It's a little like professional wrestling.

Of course, some years the mayor means it, and then it's a little like the war on terror.

This year, one of the mayor's most worrisome proposals — and I mean “worrisome” in the sense that he has thousands of blue-collar and poor parents very worried — is to cut back the city's after-school programs.

Currently, New York finances enrichment programs that run from 3 to 6 p.m. at 454 sites, serving 53,000 elementary, middle and high school students and costing \$90 million; the proposal is to reduce that to 261 sites, serving 27,000 children for \$71 million.

This would save \$19 million in a budget of \$67 billion, or about a quarter of 1 percent.

The program enables parents who can't afford child care to hold jobs knowing that their children are safe and learning.

What adds to the budget drama is that some of the sites scheduled to be shut are among the city's best.

So not only is the process painful, but it is also inscrutable.

One program that is marked for closing, at Public School 24 in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, is considered so good that city officials take visitors there to see how after-school services are supposed to work. In November, Michael Dogan, a senior director at the Department of Youth and Community Development, escorted two colleagues from another city agency. "We wanted to show them a quality program" that exemplified our model, he wrote in an e-mail to Yadira Garcia, the director of the P.S. 24 after-school program.

Another program slated for closing is at Intermediate School 318 in Williamsburg. This program produced the best middle school chess team in America, which recently won the national high school championship. Team members — who learned chess at the after-school club — were featured on the front page of The New York Times last month and are the subject of a new documentary.

After the victory, the mayor hosted the team during a news conference at City Hall. "I was really impressed with you guys," Mr. Bloomberg told them. "You're a lot smarter than I am."

When it comes to cutting, it's hard to know which mayor will show up to the budget dance, Fred Astaire or Sweeney Todd. "I know the budget dance," said Michelle Yanche, a leader of the Campaign for Children, an advocacy group. "I've been watching budget dances for 20 years. This is not your normal budget dance."

Ms. Yanche said an indicator of the mayor's seriousness was that since 2009, he reduced money going to after-school programs by \$30 million. Along with the proposed cuts, it means that 58,000 fewer children will be in after-school programs than in 2009.

For Eridania Santos, a single parent of two, the program at P.S. 24 is the difference between being a \$22,000-a-year legal assistant or a welfare mother. She particularly appreciates the daily homework help and the 20 minutes of independent reading. "It means when I get home from work, it's not just, 'Eat, do your homework, go to bed,'" she said. "I can have time with my kids."

Cathleen Collins, a spokeswoman for the city, wrote in an e-mail that just because programs were scheduled to be closed, it was "not a reflection of their quality or success, but rather a factor of limited resources and high level of competition."

She said that the 261 to remain would provide more comprehensive — and expensive — services than in the past, including an education specialist to coordinate with the day curriculum; more science, math and literacy lessons; and more parent involvement.

The mayor is committed to balancing the budget without raising taxes, Ms. Collins said, and even with the cuts, more children would be accommodated than when Mr. Bloomberg was first elected a decade ago. "We are hopeful that the initiative will grow and thrive when more prosperous economic times return," she said.

This year, 1,200 organizations submitted proposals. The city's specifications were developed in consultation with representatives from the most respected programs, including — you can't make this up — two from P.S. 24. "I assumed since they were adopting our ideas, we'd be safe," Ms. Garcia said.

Lucy Friedman is president of the After School Corporation, a nonprofit group that supports these providers nationwide. Her group named P.S. 24 one of the city's three best in 2008. "It is a travesty that this program is now on the chopping block," she said.

The P.S. 24 program is one of two run by the Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility. The other, at Middle School 214 in the Bronx, is much newer and yet has had its financing renewed for next year.

"This makes absolutely no sense," said Tala Manassah, the deputy director of Morningside, which opened the program at P.S. 24 in 1999. "P.S. 24 has a great track record. There are not many programs in the entire city that are as awarded as the one we have at P.S. 24."

The school serves precisely the children that city officials say they want to reach — 95 percent of the 240 qualify for subsidized lunches. English is the second language for about half.

Originally, children were selected on a first-come, first-served basis, but after parents started lining up in the street hours ahead of time, a lottery system was developed.

Activities besides reading and homework include theater, art, music, robotics, sports and a peer mediation program that has been featured on — you can't make this up — the United States Department of Education's "Doing What Works" Web site.

P.S. 24 has also been awarded a \$90,000 arts grant by the SHS Foundation. Students have made theater trips to see "Spider-Man," "Mary Poppins" and "The Little Prince," and taken classes at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

Eric Torres, 20, who is studying accounting at the College of Staten Island, works as a counselor in the P.S. 24 after-school program. When he was a boy, he attended the P.S. 24 program and looked up to his counselor, a young man named Santos. Among the many things Santos taught were methods of avoiding fights. "In my entire life, I've never been in a fight, in school or out," Mr. Torres said.

Christian Montano, 9, is learning the same from his favorite counselor, Mr. Torres. "He corrects me every time I do a little something wrong," Christian said. "He'll give me a warning — he makes it rhyme. 'Put it away, before I take it away,' and it doesn't get me in trouble."

Every afternoon, the names of counselors working that day are posted on a board. "I always look for his name," Christian said. "Please be there, please be there, and then he's here."

For those interested in seeing how a top-notch after-school program works, the film about the I.S. 318 chess team, "Brooklyn Castle," will be screened Friday at 8 p.m. at the Brooklyn Heights Cinema. It wasn't intended to be a historical documentary, but that seems to be where things are going.

Read More Here: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/28/nyregion/new-york-after-school-programs-may-face-trims.html?adxnnl=1&pagewanted=2&adxnnlx=1338300405-WE588ZAzixg6I3N4RBJ/tA>

Bloomberg budget cuts would wound low-paid childcare employees, working families and kids

Slashes spell disaster for city subsidized after-school programs

Wednesday, May 30, 2012



Marcus Santos for New York Daily News

Community groups gather with elected officials on the steps of City Hall to protest Mayor Bloomberg’s proposed budget cuts that they say spell disaster for city childcare programs.

Surviving in New York City on \$28,000 a year — I’m sure you would agree — is not easy. Yet, difficult as it is, it sure beats being unemployed hands down.

That, in a few words, is the story of what more than 2,000 unionized childcare and Head Start workers, in imminent danger of losing their jobs, are currently facing.

The reason? Cutbacks of \$170 million, which are part of Mayor Bloomberg’s proposed city budget for the new fiscal year beginning July 1.

Such cuts are “an assault on New York City’s children and working families,” said the Campaign for Children, an umbrella group of advocates and care providers. And without a doubt it would spell disaster not only for the men and women losing their \$28,000-a-year jobs, but for 47,000 low income and

working class children who would be pushed out of the city's subsidized childcare and Head Start programs in the coming months.

That many of their parents — 36% according to a study by the Campaign for Children — will not be able to go to work without affordable childcare doesn't seem to enter our billionaire mayor's field of vision.

“What happens after the final school bell of the day rings is as important to students as what goes on in the classrooms,” Bloomberg recently said. Yet childcare and after-school programs seem to be one of his favorite budget-reducing targets.

Since 2009, funding for these programs have been slashed every year and the city's subsidized childcare and after-school systems today serve 43,000 fewer children than they did five years ago.

In an attempt to make him open his eyes to the dire implications these cuts would have for thousands of working people, a huge labor rally at City Hall is scheduled for tomorrow. Last Wednesday children delivered more than 5,000 letters and petitions to the mayor asking him to reconsider his plans.

“Our children, families and communities will suffer an impact that will be devastating in both the short and long term,” says a petition signed by parents and friends of the city's Head Start programs.

“If the city takes my son out of child care, I won't be able to keep my job and support my family,” said Mayra Delgado, the mother of a 3 year old. “In tough times, the childcare that working families depend on should be the last thing the mayor and City Council cut,” said Delgado, a legal assistant at a law firm

The cuts are being debated right now in the Council but if enacted more than 100 childcare and Head Start centers would be shut down and more than 9,000 children would lose their slots in only the first year. Council Speaker Christine Quinn has called the cuts “unacceptable,” a position supported by the Council's Progressive Caucus, Women's Caucus, and Black, Latino and Asian Caucus.

“This is a bad deal for thousands of struggling families, a bad deal for dedicated, low paid workers and ultimately a bad deal for all the people of New York,” said Luz Santiago, associate director of AFSCME District Council 1707, which represents many of the city's childcare and Head Start employees.

As one of the letters delivered to the mayor said, “Your administration needs to rethink its plan.”

Read more: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/bloomberg-budget-cuts-wound-low-paid-childcare-employees-working-families-kids-article-1.1086022#ixzz1wZWb2zfd>

Uptown students to Mayor Bloomberg: Don't axe our after-school programs!

PS 311 Amistad Dual Language School one of hundreds that would see afternoon care scrapped

By Douglas Feiden

Thursday, May 31, 2012

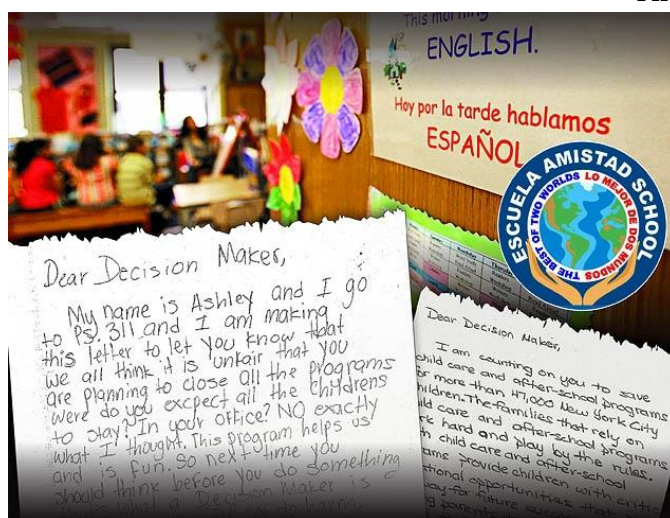


Illustration by E Fitz Smith/Daily News

Fifth grade students at PS 311 Amistad School in Washington Heights are writing to local lawmakers to protest drastic funding cuts for after-school care contained in Mayor Bloomberg's proposed budget for FY 2013. The students' after-school program, run by Inwood Community Service Inc., is one that would be scrapped.

The children of upper Manhattan are about to deliver a heartfelt message to Mayor Bloomberg: Put away your budget axe and spare our beloved after-school programs.

"This program is awesome!" wrote 10-year-old Solianny Perez, a fifth-grader from Washington Heights, in a letter to City Hall. "Please, please do not shut it down."

In their first taste of political activism, 300 students from three schools in the Heights and Inwood fired off a torrent of emotional appealsto city budget cutters, demanding that they save the Out-of-School-Time programs, or OST.

"Many people don't have enough time to take care of their children because they might have to work all day and might be poor and not have enough money," Perez argued.

At issue is a plan to chop OST funding by \$18.2 million, closing 193 sites that offer after-school programs citywide and affecting nearly 25,000 elementary, middle and high school students.

The cuts, a pittance in Bloomberg's proposed \$67.8 billion budget, would end enrichment programs that run from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. and offer help with homework along with lessons in reading and college prep.

Funding would plunge to \$73.3 million from \$91.5 million and after-school sites would be reduced to 261 from 454, leading to staff layoffs and the provision of services to just 28,729 kids, down from 52,567.

The proposal set off alarm bells at PS 311 Amistad Dual Language School, PS 366 Washington Heights Academy and PS 278 Paula Hedbavny School, where after-school programs run by Inwood Community Services would be chopped.

Coached by staffers and writing in longhand, the students, aged 10 to 14, penned letters — addressed, "Dear Decision Maker" — saying they had nowhere else to go when the afternoon school bell rings.

Their parents would be forced to leave them at home alone — or to give up jobs in order to take care of them, they wrote. Unsupervised, they could fall prey to a host of unsavory dangers.

"Kids will want to stay in the streets and they might make bad choices, and I know you don't want this to happen," wrote Angeli Reynoss, 10, a fifth grader.

Added Ashley Matias, another Amistad student: "Where do you expect the children to stay? In your office? NO, exactly what I thought . . . A Decision Maker is supposed to HELP, not do harm."

The Dept. of Youth & Community Development, which funds OST, cites rising program costs and limited resources in recessionary times, which has led to 12 rounds of budget cuts since 2008.

DYCD will still "provide high-quality, comprehensive services to our students through the OST program . . . within our financial reality to do so," says Cathleen Collins, the agency's deputy chief of staff.

Not good enough, says City Councilman Robert Jackson (D-Washington Heights), who chairs the Education Committee.

"The people I represent are angry and upset," he says. "The cuts are simply devastating, and the city has been unable to answer one simple question: 'What are working parents supposed to do?'"

Adds City Councilwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito (D-East Harlem): "We're eroding the safety net — and taking away options from our children, our families, our working class, our middle class and our working poor."

To fight back, she hosted a town hall rally on Wednesday at the Children's Aid Society on E. 101st. Meanwhile, District Council 37 is leading a protest at City Hall Park — set for Thursday at 11 a.m. — aimed at stopping the cuts.

But the most eloquent voices are those of the children: "I need the program," wrote sixth-grader Azalias Hernandez. "Without it, I have nowhere else to go!!"

Read more: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/uptown/uptown-students-mayor-bloomberg-axe-after-school-programs-article-1.1087150#ixzz1wZX4r2pz>



Dennis Walcott On After School Programs, Bullying, Teacher-Student Relationships

May 31, 2012

PIX11 visited the East Side House Settlement and the Educational Alliance after school programs.

These organizations run several after-school programs in the South Bronx and on the Lower East Side, which are slated for closure as part of Mayor Bloomberg's budget cuts. We spoke to parents and students who say they will have to quit their jobs without these programs.

Schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott then joined us to give us his reaction to the front cover of Wednesday's NY Post concerning the inappropriate relationship between a teacher and a student. We'll also ask him about the new legislation concerning sexual misconduct.

Read More Here: <http://www.wpix.com/news/morningnews/wpix-dennis-walcott-053112,0,4181902.story>

East Harlem Parents and Students Rally Against Mayor's Child Care Cuts

HARLEM — Janai Harris, 18, doubts she would be on her way to study English at Gettysburg College this fall if it weren't for the support she found at the Children's Aid Society's East Harlem Community Center.

Harris, who was named "Youth of the Year" at the center, said the six years of homework help, mentoring and the job the center eventually helped her land were invaluable.

Without the safe haven — one of hundreds threatened by Mayor Michael Bloomberg's plan to slash funding for child care programs — she'd have been lost, Harris said.

"I would probably be like half the other kids on my block and just standing around," Harris told more than 300 parents and children gathered Wednesday to protest the cuts.

"This center is the reason I'm able to stand here as a young woman and attend college today.... I always had a place here and no one denied me anything."

The mayor's [executive budget, if adopted, would result in the loss of 200 after-school programs](#) serving more than 47,000 elementary and middle school students and the elimination of 8,200 early-childhood learning spots. A recent [report by Public Advocate Bill de Blasio](#) put the pricetag of the cuts at \$175 million, but the mayor's office has said it's closer to \$72 million.

Dave Giordano, director of the East Harlem Community Center, said he would lose after-school slots for the 230 kids he currently has registered.

"My biggest concern is that I never say 'No.' And now I'm going to have to start saying no to kids," Giordano said. He said he may be forced to start charging parents a fee next year.

"Parents don't have the money. I have many parent who make \$8 or \$9 per hour who don't get raises. How much can they afford from their checks?" he added.

East Harlem Councilwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito said the cuts would devastate her district, which includes the South Bronx. Thirteen of the 19 after-school programs in District 8 would be lost along with 250 child care slots.

"If you whittle away at these programs, you whittle away at the middle class of this city," said Mark-Viverito, who sponsored the town hall-style rally.

A survey of 4,000 parents by the [Campaign for Children](#), a coalition of youth service providers opposed to the cuts, found that 50 percent of parents using city-funded child care and 36 percent who use after-school programs said they would have to quit their jobs if Bloomberg's cuts are approved by the City Council.

Sixteen percent of parents who use after-school programs that serve elementary and middle-school students ages 5 to 13, said they would leave their children home alone.

Katherine Eckstein, director of public policy for The Children's Aid Society, which is part of the Campaign for Children, said 43,000 early childhood spots have been lost since 2009.

"It doesn't make sense for a city that had the right idea to invest in early childhood education and after-school programs that prepare and help children with school to make these cuts," said Eckstein.

"We need leaders who will take a stand on this issue."

The mayor has until June 30 to finalize the budget with the City Council.

Lewis Zuchman, executive director of SCAN NY — and one of the [original 1961 Freedom Riders](#) — said the proposed cuts would only lead to an increase in gang violence and unemployment. He compared the yearly battle against program cuts to the efforts to bring civil rights to African Americans in the Deep South.

"It's insulting and shortsighted," he said. "We've been getting cut for years now."

Barbara Spratt said two of her grandchildren, including one she has custody of, participate in East Harlem after-school and daycare programs. The family counseling and tutoring offered there are invaluable.

Spratt said her daughter, who is set to begin a job as a 911 operator, would be devastated by the cuts because she relies on the child care programs to enable her to work.

"A lot of kids in gangs don't have the support that is provided at these after-school programs," said Spratt, who said she'd have to take her grandchild out of the neighborhood to find an alternative after-school program if the one at the East Harlem Community Center is cut.

"The cuts are going to affect children in a negative way."

Read More Here: <http://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20120531/east-harlem/east-harlem-parents-students-rally-against-mayors-child-care-cuts#ixzz1wZYPrzwi>

Aumenta clamor contra recortes a guarderías

ROSA MARGARITA MURHY

Nueva York - Al grito de "no más recorte a la educación", cientos de manifestantes protestaron ayer en contra de los recortes del cuidado infantil y de programas después de la escuela.

Una vez más, padres de familias, activistas de la comunidad, líderes sindicales y funcionarios electos exigieron que se restauren los fondos para el servicio público de educación temprana y programas después de la escuela.

Yolanda Murillo, acompañada de su hijo de 3 años, quien se unió a cientos de participantes que se dieron cita en los alrededores de la Alcaldía de Nueva York, dijo que los niños no necesitan una niñera sino ir a las escuelas para que aprendan a convivir con otros menores.

La joven madre, de origen ecuatoriano comentó que a su niño le falta más de un año para entrar a pre-kindergarten y que el salario que gana como trabajadora de limpieza no le alcanza para pagar una guardería privada.

"Estos recortes nos afecta a todos los padres de bajos recursos. Es una situación triste, tenemos que velar por el futuro de nuestros hijos. Creo que la educación temprana es importante para los niños porque ellos son el futuro de este país", expresó Murillo.

Durante la demostración, muchos padres aseguraron que si se llevan a cabo los recortes, tendrían que dejar de trabajar para cuidar a sus hijos.

Si se aprueba el presupuesto preliminar ejecutivo 2013, se perderán unos 15,900 puestos en centros de cuidado diario infantil. También 31,600 niños y jóvenes dejarán de asistir a los programas después de la escuela.

Por otro lado, Raglan George Jr., presidente ejecutivo del sindicato AFSCME District Council 1707, que representa a trabajadores y guarderías infantiles, manifestó: "El alcalde Bloomberg está destruyendo los servicios del cuidado de los niños..".

Llamadas realizadas a la Alcaldía no fueron respondidas.

Read More Here: [http://www.impremedia.com/Aumenta clamor contra recortes a guarderias](http://www.impremedia.com/Aumenta_clamor_contra_recortes_a_guarderias)

City Hall demonstrators fear horror stories lurk behind Bloomberg budget

Call for an end to sacrifices demanded of working people



Michael Schwartz

Sunday, June 3, 2012

Demonstrators rally at City Hall protesting proposed budget cuts to after-school and childcare programs.

Last week was a busy one at City Hall.

A veritable parade of potential victims protesting Mayor Bloomberg's proposed budget cuts took turns occupying its steps at various times.

All of them shared one basic message: Stop demanding more sacrifices from working people.

Impressively more than 3,000 people — teachers, childcare workers, and activists from across the five boroughs as well as children and parents in danger of losing affordable childcare, which would force them to quit their jobs — rallied on the steps of City Hall.

Their message was a simple one: The City Council needs to reverse Bloomberg's disastrous cuts and fully restore the childcare funding eliminated in his proposed city budget for the new fiscal year, which begins July 1.

“Our community, like many others across this city, is being devastated by these cuts,” said Li Jung Chan, an assistant daycare teacher in Chinatown during the rally. “We’re counting on the City Council to do the right thing.”

If the mayor’s budget is approved 47,000 low-income and working class children would be pushed out of after-school programs.

“If the city takes my son out of child care, I won’t be able to keep my job and support my family,” said Mayra Delgado, a legal assistant in Manhattan and the mother of a 3 year old. “In tough times, the childcare that working families depend on should be the last thing the mayor and City Council cut.”

Impressive as it was, the childcare protest was not the only one.

Hundreds of advocates for homeless children who would be left to fend for themselves, and hundreds of supporters of the city libraries which would have to close many branches or drastically reduce their hours of operation if the mayor’s plan is approved, also rallied at City Hall last Thursday.

If the mayor’s budget is approved, public libraries, one of the few free services used by millions of working-class people in New York at a time of growing poverty, unemployment and homelessness, would be decimated.

The Queens Library system alone would lose \$26.7 million, which means that 605 people would lose their jobs, 18 libraries would close altogether, 30 more would close four or five days per week. Only one library would be open on Saturdays, and there would be no Sunday library service at all.

A draconian reduction of \$7.2 million from the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development’s already insufficient \$12 million budget for homeless youth is also on the block in the mayor’s budget.

“Mayor Bloomberg gives lip service to serving the city’s youth, but this budget reflects his true priorities,” says James Bolas, director of education with Empire State Coalition. “The budget for youth homeless services is already beyond inadequate, and these cuts will show Bloomberg turning his back on homeless youth.”

According to the Campaign for Youth Shelter, currently the the department provides only 250 youth shelter beds. In 2008 the Council released the results of a census of New York City’s homeless youth, which found there were 3,800 youths without shelter.

These would be some of the consequences of the mayor’s budget. If it sounds like a horror story is because it is.

Bloomberg, who last Thursday vetoed the popular living wage bill the Council had passed by a wide margin, seems to have forgotten that he was elected to be the mayor of all New Yorkers, low-wage workers and the poor included.

The message the City Hall demonstrators are sending Bloomberg is an end to devastating budget cuts that disproportionately affect low-income New Yorkers.

Read more: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/city-hall-demonstrators-fear-horror-stories-lurk-behind-bloomberg-budget-article-1.1087633#ixzz1wrTOarR7>



Harris-Perry: Bloomberg's NYC budget cuts may be 'recipe for disaster'

MSNBC's Melissa Harris-Perry warned Sunday that city budget cuts could have an unintended consequence: a spike in crime.

Speaking on *The Melissa Harris-Perry Show*, she focused particularly on New York City, where mayor Michael Bloomberg has proposed budget cuts that could lead, she said, to tens of thousands of "low-income and working class children [being] pushed out of after-school programs."

"It's true that in tough times cities have to make cuts in order to stay afloat. But cutting too much can lead to unintended consequences," Harris-Perry said. "Last month New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg proposed a budget that would cut the number of after-school program sites from 454 to 261. This will save the city \$19 million—a fraction of the \$67 billion dollar budget. It also leaves twenty-six thousand children with nowhere to go, parents having to choose between work and childcare, and a potential recipe for disaster."

"Kids out in the summer without programs sounds like, 'Let's please have a crime rate!'" she said to hip hop artist Jay Smooth. "It definitely sounds disturbing and it shows how skewed the priorities can be in a lot of ways," replied Smooth.

Indeed, research shows that investing in children through programs like early childhood education and after-school programs helps cut down on crime—which, in the long run, saves a lot of money. As thousands of New Yorkers protest on the steps of City Hall, it remains to be seen whether Bloomberg and other budget-cutting mayors across the country will heed this lesson.

Video Here: <http://leanforward.msnbc.msn.com/news/2012/06/03/12034293-harris-perry-bloombergs-nyc-budget-cuts-may-be-recipe-for-disaster?lite>



Yasmeen Khan

Monday, June 04, 2012

The final day for New York City residents to weigh in on Mayor Michael Bloomberg's proposed budget before the City Council begins wrangling for the restoration of funds is on Wednesday.

The Council is also expected to hear Wednesday from independent watchdogs, including City Comptroller John Liu and Ronnie Lowenstein, director of the Independent Budget Office.

Once the budget hearings end, the Council will then spend much of the rest of June in negotiations with the Bloomberg administration, in hopes of restoring funds to certain programs.

City Council committees have spent the past few weeks examining the \$68.7 billion spending plan with the heads of city agencies.

The areas facing the biggest cuts, and getting the most attention, are after-school and childcare programs and the proposed closure of 20 fire companies.

The advocacy group Campaign for Children estimates that the executive budget proposal eliminates more than 15,000 childcare seats and more than 32,000 slots for after-school programs.

These are the issues the Council has said are priorities when it looks to dip into its own discretionary funds.

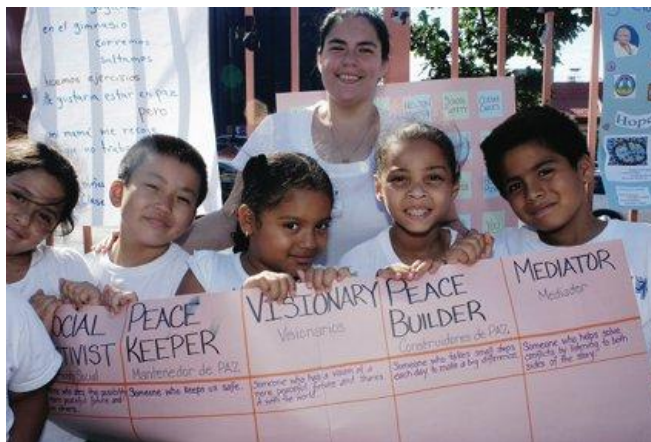
City Council Speaker Christine Quinn has said she is "deeply concerned" about cuts to major childcare and after-school programs and that cutting 20 fire companies needlessly endangers public safety.

The executive budget does protect the teaching workforce, a change from the mayor's preliminary budget proposal in February. Without the restored funds, the Education Department would have seen a loss of more than 2,500 teachers through attrition.

Read More Here: <http://www.wnyc.org/blogs/wnyc-news-blog/2012/jun/04/budget-hearings-end-week-then-negotiations-begin/#>

Brooklyn Daily Eagle

SCHOOL PROGRAM MASSACRE: Kids rip program cuts



Children at PAZ, an award-winning day care center in Sunset Park's P.S. 24, protest the mayor's plan to kill their program. Photo courtesy of PAZ

Mary Frost

Hundreds of students, parents and allies rallied at a Sunset Park school and outside City Hall on Thursday, to protest a "doomsday" budget that would eliminate child care, Head Start and after-school programs for as many as 47,000 low-income city kids.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg has cut child care and after-school programs for five consecutive years. While many of these cuts were later reversed by the City Council, his latest proposal would result in 90,000 fewer slots than in 2009, according to the advocacy group Campaign for Children.

The budget for Fiscal Year 2013 — which begins July 1 — would eliminate 15,368 child care slots and 32,333 after-school slots, 26,000 of them from a program called Out-of-School Time and 5,600 from the Beacon Program.

About half of Brooklyn's approximately two dozen Out-of-School-Time programs would be shut down, said Campaign for Children, a non-profit advocacy program. The McKinley Beacon Program at I.S. 259 in Bensonhurst — which served more than 1,300 Brooklyn residents this year — is one of them.

"It would be terrible if it closed. Everyone would feel it, particularly working parents who need a place for their kids to go after school," Laurie Windsor, president of the Community Education Council of School District 20, told the Brooklyn Eagle in April.

“I am absolutely outraged that the city would even think of closing this center,” Councilman Vincent Gentile said.

Funding for the award-winning PAZ after-school program at Sunset Park’s P.S. 24 will also be eliminated. PAZ serves 240 low-income kids from 3-6 p.m. after school and throughout the summer. The announcement that their program would be closed stunned the children, families, and staff, according to the center.

In his budget presentation on May 3, Mayor Bloomberg said that “spending restraint” allowed the city to balance its budget without tax increases.



Photo courtesy of PAZ

This year’s cuts accompany the implementation of a new Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) program, EarlyLearn NYC — a total revamp of the structure of city subsidized childcare.

The stated goals of EarlyLearn sound commendable — to raise program standards and increase coordination of services — but critics say that the program will decimate long-time daycare programs previously supported by the city, leaving more than 6,000 child care slots permanently eliminated.

“One, the city has gone through the EarlyLearn RFP [Request for Proposals], and has rewarded fewer slots in day care and after-school, beginning October 1,” said Jim Matison, executive director of the Brooklyn Kindergarten Society.. “As of July 1, the city is still under the old system. There’s an assumption there will be a return of funds for the next three months. If not, there will be a bloodbath.

“Some centers closed under the existing system are the same ones that are open on October 1,” Matison added. “This is where it ceases to be rational.”

Secondly, Matison said, “EarlyLearn will cut out thousands of slots. Families will be told to leave their kids with grandma or siblings, or quit their jobs. These are not pretty options.”

In a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request filed by Brooklyn Councilmember Letitia James (D - Fort Greene), James says there's a problem with the criteria used to decide which day care centers would receive EarlyLearn funding — and that the plan doesn't come close to providing enough daycare slots.

“Several centers in my district will be closed as a result of this RFP and many others have been significantly downsized as slots have been diverted to lesser known centers in and around the community. The citywide effect is even more detrimental,” she said in a statement. “Over 6,500 children will be left without a slot come this November as a result of EarlyLearn. I believe something is extremely wrong with this picture and it is our time now to stand up and say enough is enough.”

James wants ACS to release all of the proposals submitted to the EarlyLearn RFP, the justification for scores, and records of the negotiations leading to the decision about which daycare programs would receive funds.

As of Tuesday, 20 Community Boards had passed formal resolutions, with other board resolutions pending or under consideration.

"Now is not the time to cut services that parents so desperately need to help them maintain a stable and safe environment for their children," said Benjamin Solotaire, chair of the Human Services Committee of Brooklyn Community Board 6. "We urge the mayor and the City Council to fully fund these essential programs in the final budget."

In addition, 57 school principals and 89 academics from graduate schools of education and social work urged city officials to consider the negative impact that cuts to child care and after-school would have on low-income children's educational success.

Read More Here: <http://www.brooklyneagle.com/articles/school-program-massacre-kids-rip-program-cuts>



Budget official warns taxi case could cost NYC \$1B

NYC Wire

SAMANTHA GROSS

June 6, 2012

NEW YORK (AP) - The mayor's top budget official warned on Wednesday that a legal challenge to a taxi initiative could deprive the city of \$1 billion that's already built into next year's budget - a loss that could result in deep cutbacks throughout city government.

Office of Management and Budget Director Mark Page emphasized that he believed the city would win its legal fight, but he said there would be at least a delay in the sale of 2,000 new taxi medallions, originally scheduled for July and expected to bring the city about \$1 billion.

The sale was to have closed a gap in the \$68.7 billion budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1. Because the city is required to balance its budget each year, officials will have to get the money from cutbacks or other funding sources if the medallion sales don't happen by June 2013.

"It's a billion dollars of revenue, so that's a large number and something we're concerned about," Page said following his testimony Wednesday before the City Council.

The council and independent Mayor Michael Bloomberg must agree on a final budget deal before the end of the month. On Tuesday, the mayor called the legal challenge to the taxi initiative "worrisome."

The five-borough taxi plan would make it legal for passengers to hail livery cabs - instead of just yellow taxis - in upper Manhattan and the four other boroughs. It also calls for the sale of the new yellow-taxi medallions. Cabbies fought the proposal, saying it would cut into their business, but Bloomberg pushed the law through the state legislature after negotiations stalled in the City Council.

The city, which has about 13,000 yellow taxis, has been ordered to halt the program while a judge considers a challenge claiming the matter should have been decided by city lawmakers. The judge has said he will rule quickly, and he could pass judgment as early as this month, while the budget is being finalized.

Democratic City Council Speaker Christine Quinn said in a statement she had "serious concerns" about the effect the court proceedings could have on the city's budget.

"The judge's temporary restraining order jeopardizes our ability to reach a balanced budget without having to make even more drastic cuts than have already been proposed," she said. "Right now, my principal concern is with reaching a balanced budget that protects important city services."

City Public Advocate Bill de Blasio - who has filed court papers in support of the lawsuit - said any shortfalls stemming from the court case are Bloomberg's responsibility.

"Mayor Bloomberg staked the revenue from his taxi plan on an illegal process," de Blasio said in a statement urging the mayor to win the support of the City Council and pass the taxi initiative as a local law. Both Quinn and de Blasio are expected to run to replace Bloomberg next year.

At the hearing, Page faced tense questioning from City Council members, many of whom expressed concerns about cutbacks included in the mayor's budget proposal. Under the mayor's proposal, about half the 52,000 slots in city-sponsored after-school programs serving low-income neighborhoods could be lost. Advocates say more than one-third of the 42,000 child care slots for children in low-income working families also are threatened.

"We're not only destroying the child care system, but we're going to be destroying vulnerable families," Democratic Councilwoman Annabel Palma, chair of the General Welfare Committee, told Page.

About 20 people were removed from the City Council chamber after a demonstration by clergy members, who stood silently in front of the lawmakers holding signs protesting the cuts to services. One yelled out as he was escorted from the chamber: "The budget is a moral document."

Page noted the final budget is still in the works and said the city was doing the best it could with limited resources.

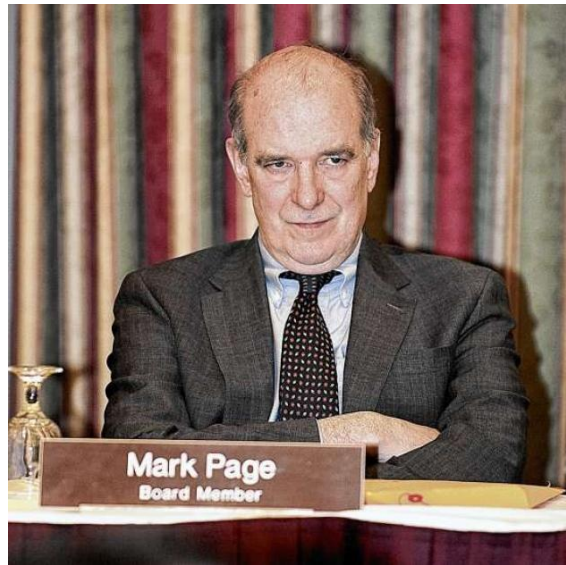
"We've been in a position for a number of years of squeezing," he said. "We are under pressure to provide services, and we don't have enough money."

City budget director fears loss of \$1B if new taxi plan is defeated in court

Mark Page says unfavorable decision could require drastic slashing of services to cover lost medallion money

By Tina Moore AND Reuven Blau

Wednesday, June 6, 2012



Bryan Pace for New York Daily News

City budget director Mark Page fears huge losses for the city if new taxi plan is shot down in court.

With a wave of cuts already included in Mayor Bloomberg's budget proposal, the city's budget director fears the loss of up to \$1 billion in revenue if the new taxi plan is defeated in court.

"That's a large number, and it's something we are concerned about," Budget Director Mark Page told reporters Wednesday.

The taxi deal, passed in Albany in December, allows the

Taxi and Limousine Commission to sell 2,000 lucrative yellow cab medallions starting next month, which would pump seven figures of dough into the city budget.

But earlier this month, Manhattan Judge Arthur Engoron issued a preliminary injunction, holding up the taxi plan while a lawsuit waged by taxi fleet owners, lenders and Public Advocate Bill de Blasio is argued. New legal briefs from both sides are due on June 19.

"His actions so far are not that favorable, but we don't know where he's going to be," Page said of Engoron, adding that he hopes the case will just delay sale of the medallions, and not reduce the amount expected to

be collected. Yet he cautioned that an unfavorable decision for the city could require drastic slashing of services to cover lost medallion money.

“Hopefully, if the medallion sales are delayed, we’ll still be able to do some of it this fiscal year,” he said, referring to the mayor’s \$68.7 billion budget, which must be adopted by July 1. “So it becomes, I think, that the definitive moment of this problem is probably January’s preliminary budget, when we have to weigh out how we will remain balanced in 2013 and 2014.”

The plaintiffs in the case argue that the taxi plan, which also allows for thousands of new livery cabs to pick up street hails in the outer boroughs and upper Manhattan, lacked the required City Council approval. It was passed by the Legislature after negotiations between the governor’s office, mayor’s office, legislative leaders and industry representatives.

The mayor’s budget includes \$170 million in cuts to day care and after-school programs; \$58 million in savings from the proposed closing of 20 firehouses, and another \$41 million from reduced services at libraries and other cultural institutions.

Page’s comments followed a three-hour budget hearing that kicked off with a raucous protest.

About a dozen protesters — some of them clergy members — stood up holding signs that read “Stop the Cuts” just before Page testified.

“Could you please sit down?” Finance Committee Chair Dominic Recchia (D-Brooklyn) said calmly at first, before threatening to have the protesters removed.

When that became reality, and the protesters were ushered out of the Chambers by security, one yelled, “We stand for the voiceless!”

During the hearing, Page repeatedly buried his face in his hands as numerous Council members slammed the city’s plan to hire new after school providers while at the same time slashing thousands of slots in after-school programming.

Advocates say Bloomberg’s budget plan would eliminate 47,000 slots in after-school programs and day care, but administration officials argue the number is closer to 40,000.

Referring to the taxi medallion money, Page said there are numerous contingency plans in the works. “We’ll see what else happens,” he said.

Read more: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/city-budget-director-fears-loss-1b-taxi-plan-defeated-court-article-1.1091223#ixzz1x7glDjXm>



Protesters removed from NY City Council chamber

June 6, 2012

NEW YORK — About 20 people have been removed from the New York City Council chamber after a silent protest by clergy against cuts to services including city-sponsored child care.

The protesters raised signs and stood up in silence at the beginning of a hearing on the mayor's budget proposal for the fiscal year beginning July 1.

They were escorted out ahead of testimony by Mark Page, the Bloomberg administration's top budget official.

Protesters held signs that read "Raise the Revenue" and "Stop the Cuts." One yelled out as he was escorted from the chamber: "The budget is a moral document."

Council Finance Committee Chairman Dominic Recchia chastised Councilman Ydanis Rodriguez for applauding the protesters.

He said Rodriguez needs to learn to respect the institution. Rodriguez shot back: "I do."

Read More Here: http://www.cbsnews.com/2102-505245_162-57448265.html?tag=contentMain;contentBody



Taxi Court Challenge Could Cause City Budget Problems

Grace Rauh

June 6, 2012

A court challenge to Mayor Bloomberg's taxi expansion plan is throwing a new wrench into the city's budget battle just a few weeks before the deadline to reach a deal, litigation that could cost the city \$1 billion. NY1's Grace Rauh filed the following report.

There are only a few weeks to go before the city needs to reach a deal on a budget. But now, amid protests for fire companies and day care programs, there's an ominous new development in the mix: the threat of a hole of \$1 billion in the budget that starts in July.

Last week, a state judge blocked Mayor Bloomberg's plan to expand taxi service beyond Manhattan. The decision also put the brakes on plans to sell 2,000 new taxi medallions. The sales were expected to bring the city \$1 billion.

"It's hard to know where we stand in terms of the medallion sale, the timing of it and what it's going to be worth," said city budget director Mark Page.

The judge's ruling is only temporary. But it has put money at risk, money the mayor was banking on when he proposed his preliminary budget.

"The trouble with court processes is that they are not very predictable," Page said.

City officials do not appear to be scrambling to come up with additional cuts, at least not yet.

"The medallions are another variable in here, up to another billion dollars," Page said. "Hopefully, (it's) only a matter of timing as opposed to an amount at the end of the day, but we'll see."

City Hall may be downplaying the budget consequences of the taxi court battle, but City Comptroller John Liu and City Council Speaker Christine Quinn sound much more alarmed.

"If we don't have that billion dollars, there is already outrage over the level of proposed child care cuts, the proposed after school cuts, real concern about fire house closings," Quinn said. "Think if we lose a billion dollars."

"In order to include something in the budget, there should have been a pretty solid plan," Liu said. "Based on all this litigation out there, it seems this plan was less than solid."

Public Advocate Bill de Blasio supports the court challenge. He says the mayor will be responsible for any budget shortfalls.

City officials say the judge is expected to issue a final ruling later this month.

More and Video here: http://www.ny1.com/content/news_beats/political_news/162601/taxi-court-challenge-could-cause-city-budget-problems

Parents, teachers, unions and elected officials protest Bloomberg childcare cuts

By CRAIG D. FRAZIER

Thursday, June 7, 2012



It wasn't your ordinary field trip as hundreds of Head Starters from across the five boroughs joined labor unions, parents, teachers and elected officials at City Hall last week, bringing the tally to more than 3,000. The demonstrators protested Mayor Michael Bloomberg's proposed city budget, saying that it would take more than 47,000 children of low-income and working-class families out of subsidized day care, Head Start and after-school programs. About 9,000 of these cuts relate specifically to the mayor's controversial EarlyLearn program.

According to information provided by the Administration of Children Services (ACS), "EarlyLearn NYC will meet the needs of New York City's children and families by providing services to income-eligible families, allowing them to seek or maintain employment, while establishing consistent, quality services across all program sites."

Some of the unions on hand included AFSCME District Council 1707, Head Start Local 95 and Local 205 Day Care. Union leaders called on the City Council to reverse Bloomberg's cuts and fully restore child care funding. "It's about fighting for what is right and what is good in this city," declared AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer Lee Saunders. "Whenever you hurt children, whenever you hurt our unions, you have one fight on your hands."

Demonstrators said that the services are being cut disproportionately in low-income and minority neighborhoods, contradicting EarlyLearn's stated goals. More than 1,800 child care and Head Start workers will lose their jobs.

“In 2006, we funded 116,00 child care centers, but since then, the mayor has cut programs by more than 30 percent,” Brooklyn Council Member Brad Lander told protestors.

In addition to funding the child care system at pre-EarlyLearn levels, rally organizers called on the City Council to allow more disadvantaged children to participate in programs, keep rates affordable for families and retain dedicated teachers and staff in the city’s diverse communities.

Congressional candidate and Council Member Charles Barron reminded everyone that the mayor does not vote on the budget and urged his colleagues in the City Council to vote no on the cuts. Said Barron, “The EarlyLearn proposal process is a disgrace and it’s racist. Don’t use a process to cut out Black, Latino and Asian day care centers and give it to white contractors.” He continued, “You built Yankee Stadium, you built the Mets a stadium, you built the Nets an arena—Bloomberg, show us the money!”

No one from the mayor’s office spoke at the rally, but ACS Commissioner Ronald E. Richter issued a statement. “EarlyLearn NYC is the most significant innovation in New York City’s early care and education system in 50 years,” he said. “We will be providing the working families of this city higher quality services in our neighborhoods of greatest need.”

Read More Here: http://www.amsterdamnews.com/news/local/parents-teachers-unions-and-elected-officials-protest-bloomberg-childcare-cuts/article_473f2794-b025-11e1-8795-0019bb2963f4.html

Benefitting NYC's Kids... But How?

It's all about the kids this week... Or at least advocacy videos featuring kids.

BY Celeste Katz

First up: We're in for another edition of what looks like charter school advocates vs. the teachers union, now in the form of a new 30-second spot from the New York City Charter School Center that talks about what a great alternative charters are to traditional schools.



“Charter schools enjoy tremendous support in New York City from both families and voters who want choices when it comes to educating their children,” said Charter School Center CEO James Merriman in a statement. “But there is also a well-organized and well-funded misinformation campaign aimed at limiting families’ options and it’s important we do everything we can on behalf of children to set the record straight.”

As I mentioned yesterday, although in a slightly different context, a Micah Lasher-run group called StudentsFirstNY is also out there pushing to limit the influence of the UFT in the upcoming elections. While they're focusing on the 2013 mayoral, they've also jumped in on behalf of state Assemblyman Hakeem Jeffries' bid (to his stated chagrin) for the Democratic nomination in NY-8.

The Charter School Center spot (extended remix here) will run in both NYC and Albany markets. It's timed to dovetail with a lower Manhattan rally on the topic. It also follows an April report from the Center which claimed charters serve underprivileged students and get results, but still don't reach as many of the highest-needs children as would be optimal.

Update: UFT President Michael Mulgrew told the Daily Politics, "If there is a 'well-funded misinformation campaign,' it is the one that demonizes teachers and public schools being led by Mr. Merriman and his Wall Street cronies who want to privatize education and make a buck off the backs of kids. Unfortunately, until charter schools begin to embrace all children -- including significant numbers of English language learners and special education students -- they will never work for New York City's 1.1 million kids."

But we're not done talking/blogging about the kids... This isn't only about in-school hours, but afterschool issues.

In the run-up to the finalization of the city budget, a coalition of parents and their kids are putting the pressure on City Hall via a steady stream of pressers, protests and "vigils" to save afterschool slots from being cut. (I wrote about the disagreement between Mayor Bloomberg and Public Advocate Bill de Blasio on the actual impact of these cuts here in May.)

This clip shows kids serenading OMB Director Mark Page as he headed into the Hall for budget hearings Wednesday morning.



For Video and More: <http://www.nydailynews.com/blogs/dailypolitics/2012/06/benefitting-nycs-kids-but-how>



City Plans Restructuring Of Child Programs Based On Zip Codes

By: Courtney Gross

June 8, 2012



On top of steep budget cuts to day care and after-school programs, the city is also restructuring how it provides these services. The plan may hurt some neighborhoods more than others. NY1's Courtney Gross filed the following report.

After school in Sunnyside, kids dance, practice martial arts and perfect their downward facing dog.

"It gives me the opportunity to learn new things," said one student.

But living in their neighborhood may end up costing them.

Faced with a budget deficit, the city is slashing day care and after-school programs. Advocates charge 47,000 seats could be eliminated.

At the same time, both the Administration for Children's Services and the city's Department of Youth and Community Development are restructuring how they deliver programs.

They are ranking services by zip codes and prioritizing certain programs by poverty levels. That means some areas, like the Upper East Side, parts of Brooklyn and Sunnyside, may miss out on funding.

The thought is that in more affluent neighborhoods like Chelsea, residents that live in luxury apartment buildings can afford day care or after school on their own.

But Chelsea still has public housing projects. Critics of the city's new policy said those residents or lower-income ones elsewhere in the neighborhood are unfairly targeted.

"This was deeply flawed because within many of the zip codes that were either non-targeted by ACS or non-priority by DYCD, there are pockets of need," said Gregory Bender of United Neighborhood Houses.

But budgeting is about choices.

"Our goal is to reach the people that are experiencing the tough times the hardest," said New York City Children's Services Commissioner Ronald Richter.

City officials said they also considered where public housing developments are and the track record of the program while making funding decisions. But the City Council doesn't buy it.

"I know the vast majority of kids that are in this program, the vast majority of families that rely on this program do not make a lot of money," said City Councilman Jimmy van Bramer of Queens, speaking about the Sunnyside program.

Even with the city's budget deficit, the restructuring is moving ahead. Both will go into effect this fall.

Video and More Here: http://www.nyl.com/content/news_beats/political_news/162764/city-plans-restructuring-of-child-programs-based-on-zip-codes

Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club center in Castle Hill likely to close: officials

By David Cruz

June 17, 2012

Expect plenty of kids and seniors “with no place to go” if places like the Castle Hill branch of the Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club get hit with city budget cuts.

That’s the warning from Councilwoman Anabel Palma, urging Mayor Bloomberg to rethink his 2013 FY budget proposal that would cut Out of School Time (OST) programs like Kips Bay’s at Castle Hill Houses.

The cuts, taking effect in July, could force single parents to give up their jobs to look out for their kids, said Palma.

Standing before a crowd of Kips Bay members and senior citizens at a rally earlier this month, Palma asked Hizzoner to look at the faces of the young and old and think about the ramifications behind the closures.

“This is actually going to ruin communities,” predicts Palma, who herself benefitted from an OST/after school center while growing up in Soundview, once plagued by violent crime.

With Castle Hill on the chopping block, 11-year old Mercy Young said she will be left without her “second family”.

“I wouldn’t be doing anything at home,” said Young, daughter of a single mother “who needs to work.” Come September, Mercy doesn’t know who will watch her while her mother works afternoons as a nurse’s aide.

“It’s a second home to me,” said Champagne Silva, another one of the 250 Kips Bay members. “The staff motivates you to succeed in life.”

About 500 senior citizens who attend the Castle Hill Senior Center will also be effected.

“I have a place to talk to people and learn many things,” said Soundview resident Nilda Antonsanti.

The Bloomberg administration stands to close about 35 after-school programs in the Bronx, as part of a plan to close a \$2 billion budget shortfall.

Officials will also eliminate 47,000 citywide spots for kids who would participate in city-run centers. Phipps Community Development’s Beacon after-school program is one of those centers, set to shut down next month. But while Kips Bay and two other centers will close in Palma’s district, three others will open in her district in September.

But Palma spokesman Dustin Engelken called the Kips Bay Center “a special case,” with “a long history in and connection with Castle Hill. The other three centers don’t.”

The Kips Bay Center also supports the senior programming, he added.

Computer classes and games are some of the activities senior citizens get to enjoy at the program.

This is the fifth straight year the Bloomberg administration has cut children’s services, veering off the mayor’s message that a child’s development outside of school is as important as what happens inside.

The new Fiscal Year 2013 budget still needs a vote by the City Council by the end of June. Even if the budget passes with the cuts, Palma said there is a chance to restore some of the proposed after-school cuts through City Council funding.

Read More Here: http://www.bxtimes.com/stories/2012/24/24_childcare_2012_06_14_bx.html

La voz de 47,000 niños retumba en City Hall



Campaign for Children Unas 47,000 cartas y 60,000 peticiones de rechazo a los recortes en los servicios de educación temprana entregaron los miembros de Campaign for Children en el Ayuntamiento. cortesía Campaign for Children

Hoy, en el Ayuntamiento, entregaron cartas manuscritas de los pequeños afectados por los recortes a la educación temprana

Carolina Ledezma/EDLP

June 13, 2012

Manhattan – Si se concreta el recorte de \$170 millones a los servicios de guardería infantil y programas extra-escolares propuesto por el alcalde Michael Bloomberg, unos 47,000 niños y sus padres sufrirán las consecuencias.

Por eso, a pocos días de que se dé el sí definitivo al presupuesto 2012-2013, hoy los organizadores de Campaign for Children (Campaña por los niños), una iniciativa promovida por la Alianza de la Juventud de Nueva York y la Coalición de Emergencia para Salvar a las Guarderías entregaron en el Ayuntamiento de Nueva York unas 47,000 cartas escritas por esos pequeños, cuyo progreso académico se verá seriamente afectado por la reducción presupuestaria propuesta por el mandatario.

En una de las misivas firmada por una alumna llamada Tiffany se lee: "Si no tengo un programa extra-escolar, estaré muy molesta porque yo necesito ayuda para hacer mis tareas. Esto es muy importante porque mi mamá no habla inglés".

Según informó Katherine Eckstein, de Children Aid Society y representante de la iniciativa, también se entregaron unas 60,000 peticiones de neoyorquinos que se oponen a la reducción de estos servicios. De igual manera, dijo que cada día hasta que se decida el presupuesto del próximo año, los miembros de Campaign for Children harán vigiliass frente a las escalinatas del Ayuntamiento, entre tres y seis de la tarde.

Esta acción es parte de una serie de actividades de protesta que padres, estudiantes y activistas por una mejor educación han organizado a lo largo del último mes. La idea es presionar a los concejales a rechazar esta reducción de fondos.

Unos 15,368 puestos en guarderías y otros 36,333 cupos en programas para después de la escuela desaparecerían si esta Administración recibe el respaldo del Concejo para proceder con los recortes.

Read More Here: http://www.eldiariiony.com/cartas_educacion_city_hall_nueva_york_bloomberg

The Epoch Times

Children Ask Bloomberg to Restore Their Funds

Kristen Meriwether

June 13, 2012



The Campaign for Children held a rally on the steps of City Hall Wednesday to deliver 47,000 letters to the mayor and City Council in a little red wagon. (Aric Chen/The Epoch Times)

NEW YORK—As the deadline for finalizing the city’s annual budget looms, parents and children want to make sure Mayor Michael Bloomberg hears their voices regarding the proposed cuts to child care. The Campaign for Children held another rally on the steps of City Hall Wednesday, to deliver 47,000 letters to the mayor and City Council in a little red wagon.

“I need it to stay because my mother works, my aunt works, and my grandma works. Nobody can pick me up at 2:20 p.m.,” a letter from Brianna said, according to a statement.

“I need child care and after-school because it is difficult for me to care for my children. I have to work and pay for the rent and care for my disabled husband,” said Xiu Lian Chen, parent of a 4-year-old and a 6-year-old.

The programs will need \$170 million to restore child care and after-school programs to their current levels. Without the restoration, 47,000 children could be without care.

Read More Here: <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/united-states/children-ask-bloomberg-to-restore-their-funds-251686.html>

Electeds battle to save Beacon from budget ax

Phil Corso

June 17, 2012

Area politicians have not eased up on their efforts to save a popular after-school program from being cut.

After learning in March that Bayside's Beacon Program through the Samuel Field Y in Little Neck could be one of seven citywide programs to close this summer, City Councilmen Dan Halloran (R-Whitestone) and Dan Garodnick (D-Manhattan) as well as state Sen. Tony Avella (D-Bayside) have remained vocal on the topic, openly voicing opposition to the plans.

Last week, Halloran and Garodnick joined after-school program advocates and parents to call on the city to restore funding to all seven Beacon programs earmarked for elimination in Mayor Michael Bloomberg's budget. They also delivered to the mayor hundreds of letters written by children from city Beacons.

"If the decision-makers walked the halls and schoolyard of MS 158 [in Bayside] after school, they would see countless children playing, learning and making friends," Halloran said. "If they came out to see what is happening in our schools in northeast Queens, they would realize that we need the Beacon programs."

The programs were cut in response to Bloomberg's \$2.1 million in proposed budget reductions. The reductions need final approval by the Council before the new fiscal year begins July 1.

"Instead of closing programs in specific neighborhoods, the city should trim costs from each Beacon program to make them more efficient," Halloran said. "We must preserve these services for all New Yorkers."

The Beacon programs are academically driven community centers that operate after school, during summer vacation and on weekends and holidays to provide activities for children and families. Programs include basketball, tae kwon do, counseling, vocational training, dance, drama and more.

"Beacon programs are so important, particularly in tough economic times," Garodnick said. "These cuts won't just punish children by depriving them of a place to play and learn, they will also force many parents to choose between their jobs and staying home to provide childcare."

The seven Beacon programs to be shut down included Queens' Samuel Field Y, at MS 158 in Bayside, and Forest Hills' Queens Community House, at JHS 190, along with the Tottenville High School Jewish Community Center of Staten Island, the Phipps Community Development at IS 192 in the Bronx, Heart Share Human Services at IS 259 in Brooklyn, the Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center at PS 198 in Manhattan and Hudson Guild at MS 414 in Manhattan.

In a letter to the mayor, Avella urged the reconsideration of the Beacon Program, but with a creative twist. In protest of Bloomberg's recent proposal to ban large sugary drinks in select city eateries, the senator offered the after-school programs as a worthy alternative.

"I urge you to restore funding to the Beacon Program, which by providing after-school and summer school activities, gives hardworking parents, many of whom have no other option, the ability to keep their children in a safe, healthy and dependable environment," Avella wrote in the letter.

Campaign for Children spokeswoman Michelle Yanche said the potential closure was only the tip of the iceberg.

“These cuts mean thousands of young people left without the safe, educational environments that help them succeed in school, and thousands of parents forced to quit their jobs or leave their children home alone,” Yanche said.

Out of 81 Beacon programs currently running in New York City, MS 158 at 46-35 Oceania St. in Bayside, was chosen as one of the potential closures based upon the area’s socioeconomic needs.

Read More Here: http://www.timesledger.com/stories/2012/24/beaconupdate_ne_2012_06_14_q.html

DNAinfo

Hell's Kitchen After-School Program Threatened By Proposed Budget Cuts

Matthew Katz-June 18, 2012

HELL'S KITCHEN — For more than 100 kids in Hell's Kitchen, the [Police Athletic League's Duncan Center](#), on West 52nd Street, has long been the only place to go after school.

But cuts proposed by the mayor's office in its upcoming budget would forced the only PAL center in Hell's Kitchen to eliminate after-school and summer camp programs that many of the neighborhood's working parents rely on, advocates said.

The location currently serves about 125 kindergarten through sixth-graders from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., offering activities ranging from academic to recreational and cultural, said Luis Tapia, the center's director.

"Come September, we will not have that," he said.

The cuts would also reduce an after-school program for teens from five days a week to just three.

The proposed cuts, [part of Mayor Michael Bloomberg's expected 2013 executive budget](#), would take \$170 million from after-school and child care programs, [leaving nearly 50,000 students without those programs across the city](#).

The budget is not yet set in stone — it will be finalized June 30 — giving parents hope that they can stave off cuts to the Hell's Kitchen center, which spends roughly \$400,000 a year on the two programs.

"They want to close the PAL, but it's for the children," said parent Nivea Sabello at a recent Community Board 4 meeting, hoping to raise awareness of the proposed cuts.

"The Duncan PAL has served us for years. Without it, we don't know what we're going to do."

Founded in 1914, the Police Athletic League in a nonprofit agency that provides children in high-risk neighborhoods with programs designed to help them grow and become productive members of society.

According to Tapia, parents that send their kids to his center's after-school programs often work until 5 p.m. or later and can't otherwise afford after-school care. Many come from P.S. 111 and Sacred Heart of Jesus School, which are just blocks away.

"This is the bulk of our programs that will be gone," he said. "For these parents, they just see that they need security for their children, and they won't have that."

Tapia said he hasn't started any fundraising campaigns that would recoup the needed money, but has been keeping a close eye on the city's [Department of Youth and Community Development](#), hoping to find grants that he can apply for.

"I'm just looking to sustain the programs," he said. "The goal is to find enough funding to run for six months and go from there."

If the budget cuts do go through at the end of the month, the center may be forced into fundraising overdrive.

But experts said even that might not be enough.

"These cuts are so big, with the numbers we're talking about, no fundraising drive is going to make up for the systematic disinvestment of these kinds of programs," said Katherine Eckstein, a member of the [Campaign for Children](#), a coalition of advocacy groups created in response to the cuts that includes the Police Athletic League.

Beyond that, Eckstein said, the cuts would nullify the organization's original mission of giving kids in low-income and underserved areas a place to go after school so they avoid trouble.

"If we take away the programs that support them during those hours, we're all scared of what that means to them and the communities they live in," she said.

The Department of Youth and Community Development, which administers city funds for after-school programs, did not respond to requests for comment.

"The mayor has expanded after-school programming to the largest levels in city history, but we can't afford everything we want to fund," said Marc LaVorgna, a spokesman for the Mayor's office.

"We are negotiating a final budget with the City Council now, and the after-school budgets are a part of those discussions."

For now, the center continues to operate as it has. But after June 30, if the cuts are adopted, that's likely to change.

"Really, after that, if it all goes through," Tapia said, "I'm just going to have to push the big red button."

Read More Here: <http://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20120618/hells-kitchen-clinton/hells-kitchen-after-school-program-threatened-by-proposed-budget-cuts#ixzz1yR9u6300>

Child advocacy group says cuts to after school programs would have greater impact on obesity than soda ban

Mayor Bloomberg wants to slash funding for programs by nearly \$20 million

By Tina Moore

June 20, 2012



Viorel Florescu for New York Daily News

Group leader Leanne Torres conducts dance practice at Mitchell Community Center in the Bronx.

A ban on big sodas won't stop obesity if kids are sitting around at home snacking and watching TV rather than in after-school programs, a child advocacy group charges.

A Campaign for Children report — released exclusively to the Daily News — says childhood obesity would be impacted by Mayor Bloomberg's cuts to Out-of-School-Time programs.

"A majority of these kids would be staying home in apartments watching TV and eating unhealthy snacks," said Leslie Mantrone, an official with East Side Settlement in Mott Haven.

Mantrone said the group's after-school centers would be slashed, leaving 325 kids without a place to go after school. She said children in the program get training in martial arts, play basketball and do calisthenics.

"That's their recreation," she said. "They're not getting that unless they're here."

Ava de la Rosa, 40, said she'd have to quit her job if her son, Kenneth Morales, 8, loses the program.

"I'm a single parent," she said. "Who's going to pick Kenny up from school?"

Bloomberg wants to cut funding for the programs from \$91.5 million to \$73.3 million — which would plunge enrollment from 52,000 to 29,000.

Read more: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/child-advocacy-group-cuts-school-programs-greater-impact-obesity-soda-ban-article-1.1099448#ixzz1yX7Cxz1P>

2012 Bloomberg proposes cuts to programs that 2005 Bloomberg called vital



Bloomberg speaking at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Dan Rosenblum

By Azi Paybarah

Jun. 21, 2012

Even before a lawsuit blew a \$1 billion hole in Mayor Michael Bloomberg's proposed budget, he was proposing to cut millions of dollars in funding from after-school and child care programs.

Advocacy groups like the Campaign for Children have complained loudly that the cuts are too steep, and the reductions are strongly opposed by majority of the City Council.

The proposed cuts also mark a sort of reversal for Bloomberg, representing a scaling back of government spending he once described as vital.

Back in October 2005, a month before he was up for re-election, Bloomberg announced the launch of a three-year, \$200 million program called the Out-of-School Time Initiative (OST) at a school in Redhook. (OST is one of the programs slated to get cut this year.)

In a video from that 2005 event, you can see Bloomberg arguing that the program is too valuable not to support.

Bloomberg said [emphasis mine], "Scores of students get one-on-one help with their homework here after school. They're also learning cooking, or the martial arts, or sharpening their skills as artists. Or their engaged in a variety of other great recreational and cultural activities that stimulate their minds and broaden their horizons. And that's the way it's got to be because **we just can't afford to let the education of our youngsters stop and 3 p.m..**"

Read More Here: <http://www.capitalnewyork.com/article/politics/2012/06/6036517/2012-bloomberg-proposes-cuts-programs-2005-bloomberg-called-vital>



Report Says Child Care Cuts Hurt Neediest; Carroll Gardens Parents: 'We Want Affordable Care Too

Joanne Prisco and Jamie Schuh

June 21, 2012

A new report, released by the Campaign for Children, says that Mayor Michael Bloomberg's proposed cuts to child care and after-school programs will particularly hit those communities suffering from high rates of childhood obesity, rampant unemployment, low school achievement and high rates of poverty. But nearby parents are feeling the burden of cuts as well. Cobble Hill falls under a "non-priority" ZIP code. As such, Court Street Day Care Center of AMICO has announced it will be closing its doors as of Friday, June 22.

"People seem to think that if you live in Carroll Gardens you can afford to pay top dollar for day care, food and rent," Robin Casanova told Carroll Gardens Patch. "What the public forgets is that there are still a community of old timers that live here. We're the ones who suffer behind something like this. I have had people say to me 'Well you live in Carroll Gardens, you can afford it.' This is far from the truth."

Meanwhile, representatives of AMICO were hopeful that they will be able to reopen later in the season. "Our hope is that our sponsoring board will be able to come up with the discretionary funds for us to reopen as soon as possible," said Michelle Rivera, Assistant Bookkeeper at AMICO, which has been in operation for 40 years. "This happened to us last year as well. We were out of service for three weeks or so and then the funds came through in late July."

While Rivera had no way of confirming that history will repeat itself this summer, if discretionary funds are dispersed, "at that point we would call back the staff so they could prepare the classrooms and then call back the parents," she said.

The Out-of-School Time (OST) after-school system was created by Mayor Bloomberg in 2005, serving 85,000 children at its height in 2009. With this year's proposed budget cuts, the OST system will be reduced by half, says the Campaign for Children. According to the report, 191 programs are set to close, and only 25,000 children will have access to programs next year.

“Where there are hard-working parents struggling to make ends meet, and children without any other safe place to go, we simply cannot take away these essential programs,” said Stephanie Gendell of Citizens’ Committee for Children, an advocate from the Campaign for Children, in a statement. Rivera noted that individuals interested in protesting the cuts can call 311 or call the Union DC 1707. In addition, a press conference and rally against the cuts is planned for Thursday, June 28 at Gracie Mansion.

Read More Here: <http://carrollgardens.patch.com/articles/report-says-child-care-cuts-hurt-neediest-communities-carroll-gardens-parents-respond-we-need-affordable-care-too>



Campaign For Children Report Says Child Care Cuts Will Hurt Needy Communities

Caitlin Nolan

June 21, 2012

A new report, released by the Campaign for Children, says that Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s proposed cuts to child care and after-school programs will particularly hit those communities suffering from high rates of childhood obesity, rampant unemployment, low school achievement and high rates of poverty – despite promises to the contrary.

The report, which can be read in full here, argues that the cuts are not only concentrated on “non-priority” or lower-need ZIP codes, as promised.

In a case study on cuts to the Out-of-School Time (OST) after-school system, the report finds – in Brooklyn, at least –the areas losing the most OST after-school programs are also: neighborhoods with the highest rates of childhood obesity: (Bushwick, Williamsburg and Greenpoint), neighborhoods with the lowest school achievement (Sunset Park, Bushwick and Brownsville) and neighborhoods with the highest rates of poverty and unemployment (Brownsville and South Crown Heights).

The OST system was created by Mayor Bloomberg in 2005, serving 85,000 children at its height in 2009. With this year’s proposed budget cuts, the OST system will be reduced by half, says the Campaign for Children. According to the report, 191 programs are set to close, and only 25,000 children will have access to programs next year.

“Where there are hard-working parents struggling to make ends meet, and children without any other safe place to go, we simply cannot take away these essential programs,” said Stephanie Gendell of Citizens’ Committee for Children, an advocate from the Campaign for Children, in a statement. In Ditmas Park, CAMBA, a non-profit that runs several after-school programs in Brooklyn, is having its programs at PS 139 on Rugby Road and PS 249 on Caton Avenue cut from the city’s 2013 budget. CAMBA, the New York Youth Alliance and students of PS 139 marched in Ditmas Park May 9 to protest afterschool program cuts. “I’m proud to be here to show you my support,” Councilman Mathieu Eugene said. “I’m going to fight for you.”

Read More Here: <http://ditmaspark.patch.com/articles/campaign-for-children-report-says-child-care-cuts-will-hurt-needy-communities-506ad61a>



Bloomberg's Child Care Cuts Would Hit Neediest Communities Hardest, Report Says

Jamie Schuh

June 22, 2012

A new report, released by the Campaign for Children, says that Mayor Michael Bloomberg's proposed cuts to child care and after-school programs will particularly hit those communities suffering from high rates of childhood obesity, rampant unemployment, low school achievement and high rates of poverty.

The Out-of-School Time (OST) after-school system was created by Mayor Bloomberg in 2005, serving 85,000 children at its height in 2009. With this year's proposed budget cuts, the OST system will be reduced by half, says the Campaign for Children. According to the report, 191 programs are set to close, and only 25,000 children will have access to programs next year.

"Where there are hard-working parents struggling to make ends meet, and children without any other safe place to go, we simply cannot take away these essential programs," said Stephanie Gendell of Citizens' Committee for Children, an advocate from the Campaign for Children, in a statement.

Read More Here: <http://prospectheights.patch.com/articles/report-says-bloombergs-child-care-cuts-would-hurt-neediest>

City Council to negotiate over Mayor Bloomberg's budget with July 1 deadline looming

Fire companies, child care and after-school programs on block

Tina Moore

June 23, 2012



Bryan Smith for New York Daily News

Mayor Bloomberg's \$68.7 billion budget, with 42,000 child-care and after-school slots at stake, must be adopted by July 1.

With a deadline looming, the City Council was expected to resume negotiations Sunday over [Mayor Bloomberg's](#) proposed \$68.7 billion budget.

“By July 1, we need to have an adopted budget, so it could happen at any time,” said Jamie McShane, a spokesman for Council Speaker Christine Quinn.

On the line are more than 42,000 child care and afterschool slots for families who qualify for the city's financial aid.

For the fourth year in a row, fire companies are also on the block.

Public libraries, cultural institutions and services for senior citizens and for New Yorkers with AIDS remain at risk as lawmakers wrangle over a finalized spending plan for the next fiscal year.

The Council was expected to use some funds it controls to restore some of Bloomberg's proposed cuts.

Dozens of lobbyists crowded the typically quiet City Hall entry this past week, waiting to catch a word with a City Council member heading into negotiations.

Many said they'd be back at City Hall Sunday to resume talks.

“The mayor can and should stop the dance by providing sufficient funds for nonprofits serving low-income New Yorkers, and by demanding that banks and the wealthy pay their fair share,” said Patrick Markee, senior policy analyst with the Coalition for the Homeless.

Bloomberg's budget includes \$1 billion in revenue from selling 2,000 new yellow-taxi medallions, but the proposal has been stalled by a court challenge.

The medallions are part of Bloomberg's plan to expand taxi service in the outer borough's and northern Manhattan.

The budget agreement is usually sealed with a handshake a few days before the July 1 deadline.

Read more: <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/city-council-negotiate-mayor-bloomberg-budget-july-1-deadline-looming-article-1.1101340#ixzz1yp0TVWY9>

Cuts to child care on the line in budget dance

Cristian Salazar

June 24, 2012



Mayor Michael Bloomberg presents his 2013 executive budget on May 3. Photo by Spencer T. Tucker.

NEW YORK – The Campaign for Children, a coalition that came together this year to fight millions in proposed cuts to public funding for child care and after school programs, has been holding budget vigils on the steps of City Hall since the beginning of June.

It is the kind of scene typical of the “budget dance” that goes on this time of year, when the City Council and Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s administration negotiate the city’s spending priorities for the next fiscal year -- and advocates rally to bring pressure on policymakers to spare their programs from being cut.

An agreement on the budget could be announced as early as today, though the sticking points between the two sides have been significant: besides proposed cuts to child care and after school programs, 20 fire companies could be closed and funding for libraries slashed.

“You plan on doing everything that you like to do, and then the reality brings you back, and then you do only part of what you would like to do,” Bloomberg said during a news conference May 3 to announce his proposed \$68.7 billion executive budget.

A new budget must be in place by July 1, the beginning of the fiscal year.

Katherine Eckstein, the director of public policy for The Children's Aid Society and a member of the Campaign for Children, said the cuts being proposed by Bloomberg would be devastating for child care and after school programs that families depend on.

"These cuts are affecting New Yorkers who are already struggling," she said recently while standing on the steps of City Hall.

Fiscal policy experts say the budget dance has become little more than a choreographed show.

The mayor initiates it by proposing a preliminary budget sometime around the middle of January that includes many cuts to programs often dear to the Council's constituents. The Council then undertakes a round of hearings on the proposal, publishing a preliminary budget response in March.

The mayor then responds with his executive budget, which is followed by another round of Council hearings that ended this year in early June. Then negotiations begin, steered by the budget teams of both sides, culminating in an agreement and vote by the Council.

The Council has the authority to restore some funding cuts proposed by the mayor for one year at a time.

Doug Turetsky, of the Independent Budget Office, said the process directs "the Council's attention to restoring funds for existing programs that the mayor knows are very popular in the council member's neighborhoods. So they have less ability to focus on maybe some new initiatives that they want to undertake."

Maria Doulis, the director of city studies for the Citizens Budget Commission, said it also keeps the city from debating structural changes to municipal fiscal policy.

"Instead of looking at restoring some of the spending on these programs for one year, the Council should really focus on spending items that are growing at a fast pace," she said, adding that the city's capital spending and health insurance costs in particular should be scrutinized.

For their part, the mayor's office and Council point to on-time budgets in recent years to demonstrate that the dance, while imperfect, does the work.

The mayor's executive budget closes a \$3.6 billion fiscal year gap with one-time sources of funding, including \$466 million from the CityTime fraud settlement and \$1 billion in anticipated sales of taxi medallions to expand hail service to the outer boroughs.

It also redirects \$1 billion from the Retiree Health Benefits Trust, meaning future taxpayers will have to float the cost of retiree health benefits.

Budget experts have warned the decision to rely on the one-time sources was risky.

The state comptroller's office, which is one of four agencies that has oversight of the city's finances, said the "largest quantifiable budget risk" was the anticipated \$1 billion that is expected to be raised from the sale of 2,000 taxi medallions. The state comptroller's office urged the city to "develop a contingency plan" if the money were not raised.

The sale of the medallions has been held up in court. Earlier this month, a state judge agreed to an injunction after yellow taxi fleet owners sued, arguing that the plan violated the state constitution because it was passed in Albany instead of in the City Council.

Bloomberg said at the time of the judge's decision earlier this month that the consequences of not receiving the expected revenue from the sales of taxi medallions would be "very serious."

There are other risks to the budget. Experts have highlighted that while the city has regained jobs lost during the Great Recession, the city's reliance on the financial sector could pose a danger given the economic uncertainty in Europe. The city's comptroller office called the European debt crisis "a primary threat to both the U.S. and local economies."

Upon the release of the mayor's executive budget, the Council said it was particularly worried about cuts being proposed to city-subsidized child care and after-school programs.

The Campaign for Children said 47,000 children would lose access to the programs under the cuts, particularly in neighborhoods with high rates of poverty, unemployment and obesity.

Speaker Christine Quinn, in a statement at the time the executive budget was released, calling the cuts "unacceptable" and that they were "being implemented in ways that create tremendous disruptions for families, communities, and providers."

Turetsky, of the IBO, said that even though the programs are perennial losers in the budget, this year would be particularly complicated because they are undergoing structural changes.

"The cost per kid would be higher under the new format," he said. "Even if the funding gets restored, it's not clear you would have the same number of kids being able to take advantage of the programs."

Read More Here: <http://www.gothamgazette.com/index.php/topics/economy/1398-nyc-budget-2013>



City Budget Deal Avoids Fire, Child Care, After-School Cuts

By: NY1 News

June 25, 2012

Mayor Michael Bloomberg and City Council Speaker Christine Quinn announced a deal Monday for a proposed \$68.5 billion budget that restores proposed cuts to fire companies, child care services and after-school services. NY1's Courtney Gross filed the following report.

With a handshake and a kiss, thousands of slots in child care were saved, fire companies were off the chopping block.

In their typically amicable fashion, Mayor Bloomberg and Council Speaker Christine Quinn agreed on a budget for the next fiscal year, which starts in July.

They did it five days before the deadline.

And they congratulated themselves.

"Working together, as I've said again and again was going to happen, we produced an on time, balanced budget for our city that does not raise taxes on New Yorkers and preserves the essential services that we all rely on," the mayor said.

"Our budget isn't just a plan on how to spend taxpayer dollars," Quinn said. "It's a statement on who we are as a city. And this budget says that we are a city where every child will be given the opportunity and the resources to learn."

Next year's approximately \$68.5 billion budget left advocates and council members grinning.

"It's a great victory for New York City's children and families," said Stephanie Gendell of the Citizens Committee for Children.

"This is all about the children of the city of New York," said Councilman Domenic Recchia, the council's finance chair.

"We thank the public," said Councilwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito, the co-chair of the Progressive Caucus. "That really was a big part of this conversation."

Monday's press conference was a change of pace from the protests seen just weeks ago, when the mayor's budget proposal was slammed for devastating city services.

"We never said the world is coming to an end," Bloomberg said Monday when asked about the shift. "We have said repeatedly, you probably weren't listening, we will come up with a balanced budget."

There still are some caveats.

The city is relying upon \$635 million from the sale of new taxi medallions. Those medallions are part of the mayor's plan to provide cab service to all five boroughs.

But that plan is currently being challenged in state court.

Bloomberg brushed off the threat.

"We still think we've done it right and we'll win," he said. "It just takes a while. Everything you do, you get sued."

The handshake between Mayor Bloomberg and Speaker Quinn was just symbolic. The City Council will not actually vote on the budget until Thursday.

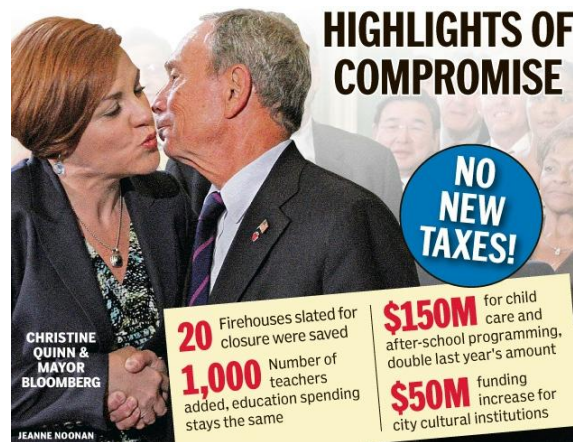
Read More Here: http://www.ny1.com/content/news_beats/political_news/163728/city-budget-deal-avoids-fire--child-care--after-school-cuts

Mayor Bloomberg and City Council reach deal on \$68.5 billion budget that won't raise taxes and avoid cuts to firehouses and child-care programs

42,000 child care and after-school program slots and 20 fire companies are saved from the chopping block as pols use funds set aside over previous years and savings from earlier rounds of belt-tightening

By [Erin Durkin](#) AND [Reuven Blau](#)

June 25, 2012



[Mayor Bloomberg](#) and City Council leaders reached a deal Monday on a \$68.5 billion budget that won't hike taxes and staved off threatened cuts to firehouses and child-care programs.

Using funds set aside over previous years and savings from several earlier rounds of belt-tightening, the blueprint held the line within the NYPD and FDNY ranks while increasing the number of teachers by about 1,000 and keeping overall education spending the same.

Some 42,000 child care and after-school program slots that could have been cut were saved, as were 20 fire companies that were on the chopping block.

“We’re able to achieve these goals without asking taxpayers to stretch their own budgets further,” Bloomberg said. He warned, however, that the city faces “a significant challenge” in the following fiscal year.

The deal, expected to be approved by the Council this week, came in advance of a July 1 budget deadline for fiscal year 2013.

A balanced budget was also possible because of the gradual improvement of the economy, and efforts to make the city's coffers less dependent on Wall Street. Revenues from the tech, tourism and film and television sectors were up.

But some Council members were worried about the future. "We kicked the can of major budget woes down the road," said Councilman Dan Halloran (R-Queens). "We used up our surplus and pinned our hopes on increased tax revenue. We're presuming that the economy will recover this year. But what if it doesn't?"

The fiscal plan adds \$150 million for child care and afterschool funding — boosting the programs' budgets by \$75 million over last year's totals. The Council will directly fund many child care programs that were rejected for contracts under a new city system that favors needy neighborhoods. "We want to make sure that New Yorkers who need child care get child care," said Council Speaker Christine Quinn, noting many recipients live in housing projects in affluent neighborhoods.

Advocates who lobbied Council members as they negotiated the budget cheered the deal. "The loss of these services would have been devastating," said Stephanie Gendell of the Citizens' Committee for Children.

The jobs of 400 school aides who were threatened with layoffs will be spared after their union agreed to cut worker hours by a half-hour per day.

The budget plan relies on \$635 million in revenue from the expected sale of new yellow taxi medallions — down from an earlier estimate of \$1 billion because a judge's ruling stalled implementation of the outer borough taxi plan.

Bloomberg said the city now expects to collect a total of \$1.46 billion over three years from those medallion sales — but will face a big budget gap if courts ultimately block the plan. "It would put an enormous hole in the budget and we'd have to close that hole," he said.

Read more: <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/bloomberg-quinn-seal-deal-kiss-article-1.1102233#ixzz1z0WGI8pp>

The New York Times

City Hall Budget Deal, for Now, Includes Few Layoffs and No Tax Increases

By DAVID W. CHEN

June 25, 2012

Despite uncertainty over hundreds of millions of dollars in anticipated revenue, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and the City Council agreed Monday on a \$68.5 billion budget for the coming fiscal year that would avoid tax increases, firehouse closings and widespread layoffs.

New York City budget officials were also able to avoid cutting child-care and after-school programs, which had been the subject of intense public pressure.

The budget was buoyed by a late infusion of \$150 million from a federal settlement with ING Bank stemming from an investigation into compliance with United States sanctions against Iran, Cuba and other countries. The city was also able to save \$240 million in debt costs through low interest rates, while collecting \$70 million more than anticipated in permits, licenses and fees.

The budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1 will be about \$500 million more than the current one. That increase, the city said, resulted primarily from a \$2 billion rise in costs that the city said it could not control, like those of pensions, health care, Medicaid and debt service.

Then again, compared with those of previous years, this year's budget agreement warrants an asterisk or two.

The budget is predicated on collecting \$635 million in revenue in the first year, and an additional \$825 million in the next two years, from the expected sale of 2,000 new yellow taxi medallions as part of a plan to expand street hail service throughout the five boroughs. But a judge's ruling this month temporarily blocked the taxi plan, on a jurisdictional question about whether such policy should be set by the City Council or the State Legislature.

Budget analysts are also cautioning that the city's revenue projections could be subject to high volatility in coming months. In May, the city's Independent Budget Office noted that "New York City is particularly vulnerable to crises that batter the banking sector or international tourism," like any upheaval in the Euro zone crisis, the slowdown of the Chinese economy or election-year domestic squabbles over taxes and spending.

As a result, many budget analysts said they would not be surprised if the mayor had to propose sizable midyear budget adjustments in the fall.

Still, during a news conference in the Governor's Room in City Hall, Mr. Bloomberg and the City Council speaker, Christine C. Quinn, flanked by more than half of the Council's 51 members standing on risers, could barely hide their enthusiasm, and relief.

"We're able to achieve these goals without asking taxpayers to stretch" their dollars, Mr. Bloomberg said.

He also praised Ms. Quinn, a likely candidate for mayor next year, who he said "has once again demonstrated a strong commitment to maintaining the city's finances on a sound footing."

Ms. Quinn returned the favor by thanking Mr. Bloomberg for possessing "visionary fiscal leadership." But she also underscored the determination among council members that "children are, without doubt, our No. 1 priority."

When Mr. Bloomberg first proposed his budget in February, the spending plan struck many city officials and economists as being fairly routine, with no layoffs of teachers, police officers or firefighters.

Over the next few months, the city calculated that tax revenue had increased more sluggishly than had been anticipated, while costs for social programs, including ones for the homeless, had risen more rapidly. But the additional shortfall would be filled, Mr. Bloomberg said, by a one-time-only payment of \$466 million from Science Applications International Corporation, to settle federal and city investigations into alleged fraud in the CityTime automated payroll system.

Then came the judge's order in the taxi lawsuit. And while the city remains confident that it will ultimately prevail in court, some budget watchdogs have questioned whether a mayor so determined to avoid raising taxes acted prudently by relying so heavily on one-time revenue payments that might not occur.

Full details are expected to be released in the next few days, when the City Council is scheduled to vote on the budget.

But some council members expressed some misgivings. Melissa Mark-Viverito of Manhattan and Letitia James of Brooklyn, two liberal council members, both said that while they were grateful that child-care services would continue, they were concerned that the contracting process would favor large providers at the expense of neighborhood ones.

And Councilman Daniel J. Halloran III, a Republican from Queens, warned that the budget had "achieved short-term victories at the expense of the long term." He added: "We're presuming that the economy will recover this year. But what if it doesn't? We need a more forward-thinking budget process that lives within our present means and doesn't assume some future pot of gold at the end of the rainbow."

Read More Here: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/26/nyregion/2013-nyc-budget-has-few-layoffs-and-no-tax-rise.html?_r=2



Budget Deal Restores Firehouses, Child-Care Programs Facing Cuts

Bob Hennelly

June 25, 2012

Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the City Council have reached a deal on the city's budget for next year that includes the restoration of some 47,000 after school and child care slots and 20 firehouses slated for elimination.

The child care and after school restorations will be paid for with an additional \$150 million added into the budgets of the Administration for Children's Service and the Department of Youth and Community Development. A Council source says the legislative body will pay \$100 million for the restoration out of its \$400 million dollars in discretionary funds. As a consequence of the new funding the City may end up with 4,000 additional day care and after school slots.

"Working with our partners in the Council, we've again produced an on time, balanced budget for our City that doesn't raise taxes on New Yorkers, and that preserves the essential services that keep our City strong," Mayor Bloomberg said.

Speaker Christine Quinn said the budget deal proved "that the children of New York City is our number one priority." Quinn said that the City would move forward with the Bloomberg administration's EarlyLearn NYC program to improve the quality of the city's child care services. Although, some council members expressed concern that the new program would shut out smaller neighborhood centers that can't meet the City's new criteria.

Mayor Bloomberg said while the agreement for next year would yield a balanced budget for FY 2013, the City faces a \$2.5 billion budget gap in FY 2014.

Bloomberg first announced the cuts as part of his \$68.7 billion budget proposal in February. Council members were barraged by calls from constituents worried about loss of their neighborhood child care or after school programs.

"In the 20 years I have been doing this, I have never seen that ground swell at the community level," said Michelle Yanche, director of public policy at Good Shepherd Services and member of the Steering Committee on the Campaign for Children.

The budget agreement does not restore all cuts to the city's three library system, but it does guarantee enough funding to ensure five day service by adding nearly \$90 million to its budget.

The budget does assume that the city will get \$1 billion from the sale of 2,000 taxi medallions even though that sale is tied up in litigation. The mayor said the city is now projecting just \$635 million in the next fiscal year.

The Citizen's Budget Commission, a fiscal watch dog group, estimates the mayor and Council are balancing the budget with almost \$3 billion in so-called one shots, or non-recurring revenue to cover recurring operating expenses.

"They are drawing down about a \$1 billion from a trust fund they set up to pay for future retirees health insurance, which means that money won't be there when we have to pay those bills," Charles Brecher, research director, with CBC.

There were also rumblings from some Council members about what they said was the over reliance on revenue one shots to cover recurring operating expenses.

Queens Councilman Dan Halloran said he was concerned about both the reliance on the one shots and the growing budget gaps projected for the out years.

"We are going to eat through the remainder of our surplus over the next two years, which means if, God forbid, if the economic downturn continues and we don't see a massive infusion of new cash coming in we are going to be up the creek without a paddle for the next two budget cycles," he said.

The new fiscal year begins on July 1.

Read More and Listen Here: <http://www.wnyc.org/blogs/wnyc-news-blog/2012/jun/25/budget-deal-restores-firehouses-child-care-programs-facing-cuts/>

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Budget Deal Reverses Cuts

Bloomberg and Quinn Say Agreement Is Reached on \$68.5 Billion in Spending

By **MICHAEL HOWARD SAUL**

June 25, 2012

Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the New York City Council on Monday reached an agreement in principle on a \$68.5 billion budget for the fiscal year that begins Sunday, restoring hundreds of millions of dollars in proposed cuts to child care, after-school programs, fire service and libraries.

Mr. Bloomberg and Council Speaker Christine Quinn, surrounded by many members of the council, sealed the deal with a traditional handshake and four kisses at a news conference at City Hall. The council is slated to adopt the budget on Thursday.

The city also lowered its revenue estimate for the planned sale of 2,000 new yellow-taxi medallions from \$1 billion to \$635 million in the upcoming fiscal year. The city now plans to extend the sale of the medallions over the next three years, with total revenue during that period estimated at \$1.46 billion.

The budget spares roughly 400 teachers aides from layoffs and restores funding to keep open 20 fire companies that the mayor proposed closing. To avoid layoffs, the teachers aides agreed through their union to work 30 minutes less a day, meaning their take-home pay will be lower.

The most controversial issue in this year's budget negotiation centered on Mr. Bloomberg's proposal to cut funding for child care and after-school programs, an initiative that sparked a deluge of criticism from council members and advocates who accused the mayor of balancing the budget on the backs of the city's most vulnerable.

The agreement augments funding for child care and after-school programs by \$150 million beyond what the mayor proposed, increasing the combined funding for the two programs by roughly \$75 million from the current fiscal year. No child will lose access to care, and nearly 4,000 more city children will be able to take advantage of these services, the council said.

In total, more than 50,000 children from low-income households will receive child care, 7,000 more than originally proposed.

Ms. Quinn said the deal makes clear that city children are "our No. 1 priority."

As in previous years, the mayor proposed closing 20 fire companies, but Ms. Quinn and her colleagues on the council have said they won't sign off on a plan they view as harmful to public safety.

The deal raises funding to cultural institutions by about \$50 million and adds nearly \$90 million in funding to the library system. Libraries, on average, will be able to provide more than five days of service a week.

The deal with the council marks Mr. Bloomberg's penultimate budget negotiation before he leaves office at the end of next year. In 2008, the mayor convinced the council to overturn term limits—paving the way for his successful bid for a third term—on the grounds that New Yorkers needed his fiscal acumen to steer the city through the global economic downturn.

Both Mr. Bloomberg and Ms. Quinn, who have developed a tight alliance, lavished praise on the other.

Budget officials have pegged the deficit for the fiscal year beginning July 2013 at \$2.5 billion. While the city lowered its estimate on how much revenue it expects from the medallion sale, the soon-to-be-adopted budget could spring a gaping hole if the courts block the city's plan to auction the medallions.

The medallion revenue has been in jeopardy since earlier this month when a judge issued a restraining order preventing the city from moving forward with a plan to bring street-hail taxi service to the boroughs outside of Manhattan. The mayor has said he's optimistic the courts will rule in the city's favor, but he's warned of layoffs if the courts scuttle the sale.

When asked how the city resolved some of its fiscal problems in such a short period of time, the mayor replied, "We never said the world is coming to an end."

Read More Here:

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304782404577489261467054178.html?mod=WSJ_NY_LEFTSecondStories



Mayor, NYC Council announce \$68.5B budget deal

NYC Wire

DEEPTI HAJELA

June 25, 2012

NEW YORK (AP) - Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the City Council reached an agreement Monday on a \$68.5 billion budget that they said includes a combination of resources from previous years, one-shot infusions and revenues from an improving economy to avoid raising taxes and laying off essential workers and finds even more funding for child care programs that had been under threat of cuts.

"A budget is a statement of priority," Council Speaker Christine Quinn said, announcing the agreement with Bloomberg and a host of City Council members. "With this budget, all of us in City Hall have made it clear that the children of New York City are without a doubt our No. 1 priority."

The legislators reached the deal, which covers the fiscal year that begins July 1, days before the deadline. The City Council is expected to vote on the budget agreement this week.

Bloomberg's budget proposal this year used several one-time cash infusions to avoid the deeper cutbacks that have been on the table in recent years. But his proposed reductions to low-income child care programs had been a sticking point with City Council members who warned they would only further jeopardize the city's most vulnerable families.

Despite the deal, the budget could still be thrown into disarray later in the year. Officials are counting on \$635 million in revenue from a planned sale of new taxi medallions that is currently held up in court. If the courts rule against the city, the auction could be further postponed or canceled. And if the money doesn't materialize by June 2013, the city will be forced to institute further cutbacks.

Under the agreement, the city's child care and out-of-school programs would get \$75 million more in fiscal year 2013 than the level they're at currently. The mayor had proposed slicing about half the 52,000 slots in city-sponsored after-school programs serving low-income neighborhoods. More than one-third of the 42,000 child care slots for children in low-income working families had also been on the chopping block.

Quinn said that the funding would not only keep all the threatened spots but add to them.

The announcement was met with praise by advocates at Campaign for Children, which said the "investment in child care and after-school programs is an investment in our city's future."

"We applaud the City Council and Mayor Bloomberg for coming to an agreement to save vital child care and after-school services for New York's working families," the Campaign said. "We thank the City Council and Speaker Quinn for once again making the City's children a priority as they worked to create a balanced budget."

When pressed, officials declined to specify what had come in lower on the list of priorities than did expanding child care, not laying off firefighters, police officers and teachers and not raising taxes.

Bloomberg said city libraries would be getting about their level of current funding. Asked about it after the announcement, Councilman Domenic Recchia Jr., chair of the finance committee, specified that it would be less. An exact amount was not available.

Libraries had been under threat of a \$90 million cut, which would have shuttered 12 of the New York Public Library system's 87 branches and closed the remaining locations an extra one or two days each week. The reduction would have also hit library systems in Brooklyn and Queens.

Once again, fire companies are safe in the budget agreement. For several years, the mayor has threatened to shutter 20 fire companies, a move the fire commissioner has said would delay response times. But each year the final budget deal has saved them.

Under the agreement, the city's roster of public school teachers will grow for the first time in several years. When the mayor issued his final budget proposal in May, he said it contained new money to replace the nearly 2,600 teachers expected to retire or quit at the end of this school year and enough money to hire for about 1,000 new slots.

Schools Chancellor Dennis Wolcott has said the funds will offer teachers and students "a year of stability" after a period of several years in which the schools lost 1 out of 15 teachers through attrition.

Bloomberg said the budget included \$2.4 billion from the previous fiscal year being carried over, as well as growing tax revenues. He said revenues, hurt by declines in the financial sector, have been helped by growth in other industries such as film and television, technology and tourism. He said the city's private sector has rebounded from the recession, regaining 200 percent of the jobs that had been lost.

Read More Here: http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=X7u6W4Ak



No Taxes, No Job Or Service Cuts In New City Budget

MARVIN SCOTT

June 25, 2012

Thousands of New York school kids will be the chief beneficiary of the city's new fiscal budget that takes effect Sunday. Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council announced they have reached agreement on a \$68.5 billion spending plan. At an evening press conference, Mayor Bloomberg announced, "We produced an on-time, balanced budget that doesn't raise taxes on New Yorkers and that preserved the essential services we all rely on."

Flanked by members of the City Council, the Mayor said there was nothing frivolous in the new spending plan. He said it is one that will insure that no firehouses are closed. Twenty ladder and engine companies that had been threatened, will remain open. And there will be no cuts in jobs or services at the NYPD. A highlight of the budget is the addition of 1,000 new teachers in the new fiscal year. Plus, funds will be made available to maintain child day care and after school programs for more than 50,000 children.

Mayor Bloomberg noted, "\$100 million in resources will be added to child care and an additional \$50 million in funding to out of school services so young people can engage in productive learning, recreational and cultural activities after school."

The upscale budget came after weeks of tough negotiations and threats of a doomsday budget that would have resulted in the loss of jobs and services/ Bloomberg said that he was able to balance this budget with the help of cuts made in city agencies, \$2 ½ billion in money saves from previous years, and additional one-time revenue boosts from such things as the sale of 2,000 new medallions for city taxis.

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn hailed the new budget which she said proves "that the children of New York City are without doubt our number one priority."

Teachers Union President Michael Mulgrew praised the Mayor and City Council for clearly understanding the importance of education and daycare. He told PIX 11 News that this is the first time in four years the city has added teachers instead of taking them away.

Read More Here: http://www.wpix.com/news/wpix-no-taxes-no-job-or-service-cuts-in-new-city-budget-20120625_0,2687887.story

NYC budget accord saves day care, fire companies

[Joan Gralla](#)

June 25, 2012

(Reuters) - New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the City Council on Monday agreed on a \$68.5 billion 2013 budget, which spares 20 fire companies from the ax and increases funding for day-care and after-school programs.

"We've again produced an on-time, balanced budget for our city that doesn't raise taxes on New Yorkers, and that preserves the essential services that keep our city strong," the mayor, a political independent, said at a news conference.

Restoring the fire companies will cost \$59 million.

Bloomberg did not reveal what was cut so the 20 fire companies could be saved from the chopping block, along with day care and after-school programs.

"There are so many balls in the air all the time," he said. "Some things wind up on the floor. Some things wind up in the budget."

The city has now won back more than 200 percent of the private-sector jobs lost in the recession; the nation has only regained about 40 percent, Bloomberg said. The recession from December 2007 through June 2009 was the worst such downturn in the U.S. economy since the Great Depression.

Funding for day-care and after-school programs was increased by about \$150 million to a total of about \$417 million. More than 50,000 children from low-income families will get day care - 7,000 more than initially planned. Almost 30,000 slots for after-school programs were restored.

"A budget is a statement of values, a statement of priorities," Council Speaker Christine Quinn said. "Without a doubt, our No. 1 priority is the importance of providing every child with a quality education," she added.

MUSEUMS, LIBRARIES AND TAXI MEDALLIONS

Cultural institutions - such as museums - are a \$6 billion sector of the city's economy. Their funding will rise slightly to \$50 million. Libraries will get an extra \$90 million, enabling them to be open to the public an average of more than five days a week.

The mayor said there would be "de minimus" layoffs in the new budget. He didn't elaborate on how minimal those layoffs might be, noting that this would be up to the city agencies involved.

The jobs of 400 teachers' aides were saved, partly because the union agreed to cut the amount of time they work each day by half an hour, said Quinn, who is expected to seek the Democratic mayoral nomination.

Bloomberg's third and final term as mayor concludes at the end of 2013.

The City Council is expected to vote on the new budget in the next few days.

At Monday's news conference, the mayor said he has increased the estimate of how much will be raised by selling 2,000 taxi medallions to a total of \$1.46 billion from \$1 billion.

But the sales now will be spread out over three years. Revenue for fiscal 2013 should total \$635 million. Another \$365 million will be raised from this one-shot deal in 2014 and \$460 million in 2015.

Bloomberg said there would be an "enormous" hole in the city's budget if taxi groups, which have sued the city to block the taxi medallion sales, succeed in their court battles.

The city's 2013 fiscal year starts on July 1.

The budget for the city's 2014 fiscal year has a deficit of \$2.5 billion, which Bloomberg said "is going to require an awful lot of work" to close.

New York City has endured 11 rounds of budget cuts since 2007 that have saved nearly \$6 billion.

To balance the new budget, Bloomberg is draining a reserve fund he created to pay the healthcare costs of retired city workers by taking out \$1 billion.

Bloomberg brushed off a question about whether the city's new budget relies too heavily on non-recurring revenues, though he thanked District Attorney Cyrus Vance for winning legal settlements. Most recently, ING Bank NV agreed to pay a total of \$619 million to settle claims it violated U.S. sanctions against Cuba, Iran and other countries.

The city got about \$150 million from that federal settlement.

Lower interest rates are expected to reduce debt service by about \$90 million in the new budget.

Read More Here: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/26/us-newyorkcity-budget-idUSBRE85P00A20120626>

GOTHAM SCHOOLS

Budget deal saves child care spots, averts school aide layoffs

Philissa Cramer

June 25, 2012



Not a single child-care slot will be lost or school aide laid off as a result of this year's budget deal between Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council.

The deal, announced late today, rolls back millions of dollars of [cuts that Bloomberg proposed](#)^[7] in his executive budget last month. Instead of losing 6,500 [child-care spots](#)^[1] and 30,000 after-school spots, the city will actually have more spots next year than this year. And although Bloomberg had slashing about 400 school aides from the city payroll — more than half as many as were [laid off last year](#)^[8] — no layoffs will take place.

DC-37, the union that represents school aides and other non-teaching school personnel, agreed to trim employees' workdays by about half an hour in order to avert the cuts, city officials said.

The budget is “not just a plan on how to spend but also a statement about who we are as a city,” said Council Speaker Christine Quinn during a celebratory press conference at City Hall. “And we are a city where every child is given the opportunity and resources to learn.”

Quinn said the city had also agreed to make changes to its EarlyLearn initiative, which aims to streamline and improve early childhood education. Council members [took up criticism](#)^[9] about EarlyLearn late last summer, after it became clear that the overhaul was likely to cost jobs and disrupt schooling for some families. They were particularly concerned that [the initiative was looking at need by zip code](#)^[10], because economically diverse areas would lose seats. Quinn said today that the initiative would now consider need by family income rather than geographic area. She also said that the city had agreed not to strip seats from [providers with longstanding relationships](#)^[11] in local communities.

A group that formed to protest the proposed child-care cuts, Campaign for Children, applauded the budget deal in a statement. “We’re grateful that New York City’s leaders put children first in a difficult budget year, and look forward to working with them to create stable, sustainable systems going forward,” the group said.

Dominic Recchia, the city councilman who [lambasted Department of Education officials last year](#) ^[12] for not giving the council adequate warning about the school aide layoffs, deserved much of the credit for making sure that no aides lost their jobs this year, Quinn said.

Last year’s [budget deal came late on a Friday night](#) ^[3] and averted thousands of teacher layoffs that Bloomberg had threatened for more than six months. The City Council restored some of the cuts with its funds, and the teachers union also agreed to some concessions.

This year, the United Federation of Teachers was less involved in budget talks because the mayor’s budget proposal did not include any cuts to the city’s teaching corps. But President Michael Mulgrew joined in the chorus of plaudits nonetheless.

“I want to thank Speaker Quinn, the council members and Mayor Bloomberg for today’s budget agreement, including no layoffs of school aides, an increase in the number of teachers, and the preservation of day care services,” Mulgrew said in a statement. “This is welcome news for the children and parents of New York City.”

Read More Here: <http://gothamschools.org/2012/06/25/budget-deal-saves-child-care-spots-averts-school-aide-layoffs/print/>



Mayor, NYC Council Announce \$68.5B Budget Deal

Both sides announced the agreement on the roughly \$68.5 billion budget Monday

June 26, 2012



Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council reached an agreement Monday on a \$68.5 billion budget that they said includes a combination of resources from previous years, one-shot infusions and revenues from an improving economy to avoid raising taxes and laying off essential workers and finds even more funding for child care programs that had been under threat of cuts.

"A budget is a statement of priority," Council Speaker Christine Quinn said, announcing the agreement with Bloomberg and a host of City Council members. "With this budget, all of us in City Hall have made it clear that the children of New York City are without a doubt our No. 1 priority."

The legislators reached the deal, which covers the fiscal year that begins July 1, days before the deadline. The City Council is expected to vote on the budget agreement this week.

Bloomberg's budget proposal this year used several one-time cash infusions to avoid the deeper cutbacks that have been on the table in recent years. But his proposed reductions to low-income child care programs had been a sticking point with City Council members who warned they would only further jeopardize the city's most vulnerable families.

Despite the deal, the budget could still be thrown into disarray later in the year. Officials are counting on \$635 million in revenue from a planned sale of new taxi medallions that is currently held up in court. If

the courts rule against the city, the auction could be further postponed or canceled. And if the money doesn't materialize by June 2013, the city will be forced to institute further cutbacks.

Under the agreement, the city's child care and out-of-school programs would get \$75 million more in fiscal year 2013 than the level they're at currently. The mayor had proposed slicing about half the 52,000 slots in city-sponsored after-school programs serving low-income neighborhoods. More than one-third of the 42,000 child care slots for children in low-income working families had also been on the chopping block.

Quinn said that the funding would not only keep all the threatened spots but add to them.

The announcement was met with praise by advocates at Campaign for Children, which said the "investment in child care and after-school programs is an investment in our city's future."

"We applaud the City Council and Mayor Bloomberg for coming to an agreement to save vital child care and after-school services for New York's working families," the Campaign said. "We thank the City Council and Speaker Quinn for once again making the City's children a priority as they worked to create a balanced budget."

When pressed, officials declined to specify what had come in lower on the list of priorities than did expanding child care, not laying off firefighters, police officers and teachers and not raising taxes.

Bloomberg said city libraries would be getting about their level of current funding. Asked about it after the announcement, Councilman Domenic Recchia Jr., chair of the finance committee, specified that it would be less. An exact amount was not available.

Libraries had been under threat of a \$90 million cut, which would have shuttered 12 of the New York Public Library system's 87 branches and closed the remaining locations an extra one or two days each week. The reduction would have also hit library systems in Brooklyn and Queens.

Once again, fire companies are safe in the budget agreement. For several years, the mayor has threatened to shutter 20 fire companies, a move the fire commissioner has said would delay response times. But each year the final budget deal has saved them.

Under the agreement, the city's roster of public school teachers will grow for the first time in several years. When the mayor issued his final budget proposal in May, he said it contained new money to replace the nearly 2,600 teachers expected to retire or quit at the end of this school year and enough money to hire for about 1,000 new slots.

Schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott has said the funds will offer teachers and students "a year of stability" after a period of several years in which the schools lost 1 out of 15 teachers through attrition.

Bloomberg said the budget included \$2.4 billion from the previous fiscal year being carried over, as well as growing tax revenues. He said revenues, hurt by declines in the financial sector, have been helped by growth in other industries such as film and television, technology and tourism. He said the city's private sector has rebounded from the recession, regaining 200 percent of the jobs that had been lost.

Read More Here: <http://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/NYC-Budget-Bloomberg-Agreement-Announcement-Cuts-Funds-Taxes-Medallions-160316655.html>

Bloomberg

Bloomberg Reaches Deal With NYC Council on \$68.5 Billion Budget

By Henry Goldman

June 26, 2012

An agreement between New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the City Council on a \$68.5 billion budget will provide day-care and after-school programs for 107,000 children, and saves Fire Department units from closure.

The budget agreement for the most populous U.S. city doesn't raise taxes and came just five days before the June 30 deadline that marks the end of the 2012 fiscal year. In the plan, Bloomberg, 70, and the council restored \$150 million the mayor cut from child-care and after-school programs and millions more to operate 20 fire-engine and ladder companies.

"We just made it a priority," Bloomberg said yesterday when asked during a City Hall news briefing where he found the money to restore the threatened programs. Council Speaker Christine Quinn, 45, had called the cuts unacceptable, saying they would remove more than 36,000 youngsters from programs.

Bloomberg, an independent, and Quinn, a Manhattan Democrat, joined by members of their negotiating teams, gathered in City Hall to announce their seventh straight on-time budget since 2006. That year, Quinn became leader of the 51-member council. For Bloomberg, passage of the deal will mark the 11th consecutive time he has met a state-imposed budget deadline.

"With this budget all of us in City Hall have made clear that the children of New York City are our No. 1 priority," Quinn said. "We're saying that child care can and must be the beginning of a lifetime of learning."

Library Funding

The budget deal also restored \$90 million that had been cut from libraries, bringing total funding up to about \$300 million, and permitting some to remain open six days a week, the mayor said. Cultural institutions will get an additional \$50 million, to \$150 million, which the mayor described as "slightly above" current levels.

The agreement also saved 650 education workers from dismissal, including 400 teacher-aides. Money to save the jobs came from an agreement with District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees to accept less pay and work a half-hour less each day; the city Education Department provided about \$8 million in savings; and the City Council used \$3 million in discretionary funds, said Justin Goodman, a council spokesman. He said \$59 million was restored to Fire Department funding.

Bloomberg is barred by the city's term-limits law from seeking re-election in 2013. Quinn is one of at least five Democrats who have expressed interest in running for mayor in a primary election next year. Registered Democrats outnumber Republicans by more than 5-to-1 in the city.

Improving Revenue

The budget reflects improved revenue from economically sensitive taxes on income, sales, real estate and business.

“While revenues from the financial sector have declined, tax revenues have been bolstered by strong growth in the tech, film and television, tourism and higher education sectors, areas where the administration has focused its economic-development initiatives,” Bloomberg said.

The mayor balanced the 2013 budget with about \$1.5 billion in cost savings from agency spending cuts in 2012 and 2013, and \$4 billion in nonrecurring sources of revenue, including \$635 million he expects from the sale of 2,000 additional taxi medallions, or licenses to operate cabs. The sale has been delayed by legal challenges from medallion owners.

Other one-time sources of funds include \$1.6 billion of surpluses from prior years, and \$1 billion from a Retiree Health Benefits Trust set up several years earlier to pay for future employees' health-care needs.

Debt Ratings

New money and savings measures since the mayor first proposed his budget in May include \$240 million from reduced debt-service payments by taking advantage of low interest rates on municipal bonds in the current and next fiscal years. The city's general-obligation debt is graded AA by Fitch Ratings and Standard & Poor's, and Aa2 by Moody's Investors Service, the third highest level for all three.

The spending plan estimates that in fiscal 2014, the city will need to close a \$2.5 billion deficit, or about 3 percent of a projected \$72.4 billion budget.

The mayor is founder and majority owner of Bloomberg News parent Bloomberg LP.

Read More Here: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/print/2012-06-25/bloomberg-reaches-deal-with-nyc-council-on-68-5-billion-budget.html>



City Council Funds for Child Care Means More Control Over Programs

Cindy Rodriguez

June 26, 2012



Protesters denounce cuts to after school programs on steps of City Hall after Mayor Bloomberg's executive budget is announced. (Cindy Rodriguez/WNYC)

The city's budget agreement Monday not only restores funds for child care, it also gives the city council more control over which centers will continue to stay open. This could mean good news for several organizations who failed to win city contracts through a new selection process.

The Bloomberg administration said the new system would raise educational standards and increase family supports by improving the screening of families. But over the last several weeks, long standing child care providers from across the city that lost out on contracts have been holding protests and complaining that the process didn't give enough weight to their experience in a particular community.

City Council members have been sympathetic to their pleas.

Now that the city council is using its discretionary funds to foot the bill for restored and additional subsidized day care slots, the council will also get to choose the providers that will receive that extra money. The council funding, however, is only good for one year, while other centers will receive three-year contracts.

Councilman Robert Jackson of Upper Manhattan said the Council plans to restore funding to programs that had been in existence for decades and proven themselves to be of high quality. "When it's our money that we're putting in, we want to have a say in where they go," Jackson said, adding that the council will make sure numbers in council districts remain constant.

Some programs lost out on contracts because they were located in more well to do neighborhoods where the need was thought to be less. Council Speaker Chris Quinn said in a recent press release that the process had excluded low income families living in affluent zip codes and the Council would reverse this.

The council restored funding for about 7,000 subsidized child care slots.

Read More Here: <http://www.wnyc.org/blogs/wnyc-news-blog/2012/jun/26/council-restoration-means-more-control-over-child-care-programs/#>

New Coalition Wins Fight for Childcare and Afterschool Programs

[Abigail Kramer](#)

June 26, 2012



Photo by David Shankbone

After months of high-stakes volleying, a new coalition of childcare and afterschool advocates has won a decided victory in the latest round of New York City budget ping-pong: [Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council announced a deal on Monday](#) to save slots for about 47,000 children in programs that were set to be slashed in the city's 2012-2013 budget. Details of the plan won't be released until Thursday, when the council holds its formal budget vote, but the childcare and afterschool slots will be reinstated with about \$150 million in additional funding for the Administration for Children's Services and the Department of Youth and Community Development, according to a press release from the mayor's office.

Just this February, when Bloomberg released his proposed [Executive Budget for the coming fiscal year](#), circumstances looked unusually dire for programs that provide childcare to the city's lowest-income families. Over the past four years, the city has already cut funding for more than 40,000 slots in the programs. The new reductions would have eliminated 15,900 more childcare slots and slashed afterschool program capacity by 50 percent, cutting services to nearly 32,000 children. The changes appeared inevitable when [new contracts were announced](#) several weeks ago, [eliminating hundreds of programs and shrinking many more](#).

The city's nonprofits are accustomed to the annual budget fight over services for low-income children and families. But this was the first year that two major advocacy camps joined forces: Traditionally,

organizations that provide subsidized childcare services for babies and toddlers have come together under a separate coalition from those that fight for programs for school-aged kids, says Katherine Eckstein, the director of public policy at the Children’s Aid Society. The result is that they can end up splitting resources and competing for the same pots of money.

“Advocacy often revolves around particular funding streams,” says Eckstein. “This year we made a conscious decision that we would work together, we wouldn’t be divided. This was about a vision for children. If there was an event at a childcare center, they were talking about afterschool; if there was an event at an afterschool program, they were talking about childcare.” That language seeped into policy conversations and media reports, which have consistently grouped early childcare and afterschool programs into a unified category over the course of this year’s budget wrangling.

The groups came together to form the [Campaign for Children](#), an alliance that grew to include more than 150 community organizations and service providers. Since February, Eckstein estimates that the campaign organized more than 60,000 petition signatures and protest letters, which were delivered to Mayor Bloomberg and members of the City Council, as well as thousands of direct phone calls and at least 100 marches, rallies and press conferences. “I’ve never seen community mobilization like I did this year,” she says.

The fight resulted in a big win, but that doesn’t mean the money—or the programs it funds—is safe for the foreseeable future. Eckstein says that only \$40 million of the restored funding will be added to the city’s baseline budget, while the rest will come from discretionary funds allocated by the City Council each year—meaning that service providers have no way of knowing whether their programs will survive past the next round of cuts.

Eckstein says that this year’s coalition is already planning for a unified fight over the long-term. “It’s about sustaining the funding in the future, and then it’s about moving beyond, to a vision for what kind of opportunities the children of New York City deserve. We want to give every kid in the city the opportunity to achieve their dreams. Today we’re one step closer to that.”

Read More Here: <http://blogs.newschool.edu/child-welfare-nyc/2012/06/new-coalition-wins-fight-for-childcare-and-afterschool-programs/>

New York Children's Services Saved As Mayor Bloomberg, City Council Find Funds

Saki Knafo

June 26, 2012



In their apartment in a rough neighborhood of Brooklyn on Tuesday afternoon, Carmen Torres and her 10-year-old daughter, Jaylee Nieves, rattled off some of what they love most about Jaylee's after-school program at a local community center. They mentioned the drama workshop. And the yoga classes. And the literacy program, where the kids and their parents are brought together to read and talk about such universal favorites as "The Adventures Of Captain Underpants."

Especially in the last year, after Torres lost her job at a cellphone company, struggled with various health problems and watched most of her belongings burn up in a house fire, she relied on the program at St. Nick's Alliance to help her take care of her daughter. So it came as a happy surprise when she learned Tuesday that funding for many of the city's after-school programs had been spared. "Oh great!" she exclaimed, after hearing that Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the New York City Council [backed away](#) from a decision to slash children's services.

Although officials have yet to reveal details of the agreement, it appears that the city will not lose any after-school or early child care slots next year, a huge relief to the thousands of parents, activists, child care workers and administrators who rallied in what some said was an extraordinary show of support for children's services at a time when budget cuts [decimated many such programs](#) around the country.

This [coalition of advocates](#) came together in March, after Bloomberg proposed cutting \$70 million from after-school and early child care programs. Because of changes to the early child care system among other factors, advocates calculated that the mayor would need to restore those funds as well as an additional \$100 million to keep the programs open in September. The alternative, they said, was losing 31,800 after-school slots and thousands more early child-care slots. They said they hoped the city would save at least some of those slots by the time the city council passed its final budget this week.

As it turned out, the city went further, finding enough money not only for those slots, but perhaps for some additional ones. The mayor's office and city council announced Monday that they'd restored \$150 million to the budget for the city's early child-care programs and Out-of-School Times after-school system, which turns out to be more than enough to maintain the current capacity. They also saved two other after-school programs that had been on the chopping block -- the Beacon and Cornerstone programs. The mayor's office contributed \$41 million, and council dipped into its discretionary funds to provide the rest. "I'm absolutely thrilled," said Michelle Yanche, the director of public policy at Good Shephard Services, a social service agency in Manhattan. "It's so wonderful to know that so many children and families -- especially all those who came to City Hall, who spoke at our events -- are going to have their programs."

Every year, the mayor and the city council lock eyes in what's known as the budget dance, the old political waltz in which both sides flirt with draconian cuts before finally restoring the money. Advocates said this year was different. "I'm practically an expert in the budget dance," said Yanche, "and in recent years it's been a dance macabre."

Since 2009, Yanche pointed out, annual funding for the city's after-school system has dwindled to \$90 million from its peak at \$120 million, partly because city council has only managed to patch up some of the cuts made by the mayor.

This week's agreement brings the annual total back up to \$120 million. Yanche attributed this to the coalition of child care supporters, called the Campaign for Children. "I can not think of another advocacy campaign that I was either involved in or have watched like this," said Yanche, a member of the campaign. "Program by program by program, child care and after-school, came together at communities, rallies, marches, speaking out in town hall meetings, in every borough. I've never seen that."

For the mayor, the agreement represents what some see as a return to form. Given his national reputation as a leader in education reform and as a champion of longer school days, many observers were perplexed by his decision to slash the programs, particularly for after-school programs, [a widely acclaimed system](#) that he helped build. At a press conference on Tuesday, Bloomberg offered a pithy explanation for his change of heart. His office simply made the money for child care a priority, he said -- "and we spent it."

Details about the agreement are expected later this week, including a list of programs that could still lose funding. In the meantime, Campaign for Children members are starting to think about how to ensure there won't have to be last-minute rescues next year. "To be able to not put families through this again," said Yanche, "I'm committed to doing everything possible."

Read More Here: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/26/new-york-childrens-services-bloomberg-city-council_n_1629090.html?view=print&comm_ref=false

NEW YORK POST

Mike, council strike \$68.5B budget deal

By SALLY GOLDENBERG and DAVID SEIFMAN

June 26, 2012

Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council reached a deal last night on a \$68.5 billion budget that restores virtually all of the proposed cuts to fire companies and child-care programs without any tax hikes.

The agreement for Fiscal Year 2013, set to go into effect July 1, includes some \$397 million in service restorations — funding that came from money the council is charged with appropriating.

But the spending plan includes less revenue from the proposed sale of new taxi medallions than Bloomberg had initially factored into the budget.

The city will plan for \$635 million from the medallion sale in the new fiscal year, down from the mayor's earlier projection of \$1 billion after it was decided that the revenues would come in over a longer period of time.

The council is expected to vote on the agreement this week.

The council — led by Democrat Christine Quinn, a likely 2013 mayoral contender — boasted of saving 20 fire companies from closure, at a cost of \$59 million, and restoring nearly 37,000 child-care slots in danger of being cut under Bloomberg's proposed budget.

The council added \$150 million in spending to save the child-care slots and fund the programs.

The deal came after weeks of tense, closed-door talks focusing on how to fix the supposedly dire situation of Bloomberg's plan to slice 26,000 slots from a program called Out-of-School Time and another 6,500 from day care.

When asked how they were able to restore services without increasing taxes — even with the reduction of taxi revenue — Bloomberg simply replied, “We just made it a priority.”

His aides pointed to recent savings of \$150 million in debt service, \$90 million from low-interest rates, \$150 million from a federal settlement with ING bank and an additional \$70 million from license and fee collections this year as some of the sources of last-minute cash.

Although Bloomberg and Quinn said the budget has virtually no job losses, Councilwoman Letitia James (D-Brooklyn) warned of “hidden layoffs” because the administration's new, centralized, plan for day care ends contracts with traditional providers, she said.

Read more:

http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/mike_council_strike_budget_deal_TQKRMFMCOcOqIAcj9ddCtM#ixzz1z0bDQuqv

Beacon School Saved From Chopping Block, Says Halloran

The after-school and camp program at M.S. 158 Marie Curie will continue

[Lori Gross](#)

June 26, 2012



The Beacon Program at M.S. 158 Marie Curie will not close, Councilman Dan Halloran, R-Whitestone, announced on Monday night.

The program, which offers after-school tutoring and enrichment [300 middle and 74 elementary school](#) students from the area, cost \$334,000 annually to run each year, according to District officials.

Many District and political insiders had [quietly speculated](#) that the program would be re-factored into the City's 2013 budget, and that the threat to close its doors was mere political jockeying.

Read Halloran's statement on the budget below:

“For once, Northeast Queens has gotten something close to its fair share. We saved our firehouses, our Beacon programs, and the pool at Fort Totten. My constituents, in the second-most taxed district in New York City, finally avoided the brunt of City budget cuts. I thank the Speaker for showing a commitment to Northeast Queens.

“But with this budget, we’ve achieved short-term victories at the expense of the long term. We kicked the can of major budget woes down the road to be dealt with by our successors and future generations. We used up our surplus and pinned our hopes on increased tax revenue. We’re presuming that the economy will recover this year. But what if it doesn't? We need a more forward-thinking budget process that lives within our present means and doesn’t assume some future pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.”

Read More Here: <http://bayside.patch.com/articles/beacon-school-saved-from-chop-block-says-halloran>

The Epoch Times

Budget Agreement Restores Firehouse, Library, After-School Funds

Zachary Stieber

June 26, 2012



Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg announces agreement for fiscal year 2013 budget on Monday with Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn and other council members. (Spencer T Tucker/NYC Mayor's Office)

NEW YORK—After months of New Yorkers protesting against proposed cuts to areas close to their hearts—such as firehouses, libraries, and after-school programs—the City Council and the mayor’s office announced an agreement for the city’s budget that will restore many millions of dollars to these areas.

Restorations include adding about 1,000 teachers and not laying off 250 school aides; funding of almost \$90 million for libraries; and approximately \$150 million for early education, child care, and youth services. The council also said it prevented closing 20 fire companies.

Funding cuts for Out-of-School Time, an after-school program, were going to slash tens of thousands of children’s slots. But now, according to a City Council statement, all these slots have been restored.

“Members of the public from across all five boroughs told us what was important to them and what needed to be done,” stated Councilman Domenic M. Recchia Jr., Finance Committee chair, in a release. “This was a team effort and, considering the challenges we faced from a struggling economy and reduced government aid, it was a success.”

Yet amid the announced agreement comes the forecast for the following year’s budget—the city will face a shortfall of approximately \$2.5 billion in fiscal year 2014.

Balancing the books

In balancing the upcoming fiscal year 2013 budget—which is required by law—elected officials resorted to what budget experts describe as “one-shot” measures, or actions that only have a one-time effect and are not recurring. Relying on the sale of 2,000 yellow taxi medallions is one example of such a one-shot measure, though the announced agreement did lower expected revenue from \$1 billion to \$635 million.

“Based on available info, about \$4 billion are used in one shot to balance the budget,” said Maria Doulis, director of city studies for the Citizens Budget Commission. “The problem with that is you are basically delaying any action that you have to take later on, so you’re depleting your resources and reserves, and you’re just in a tough spot for next year.”

A budget’s structure provides the key for future stability, Doulis said. Altering the city’s health insurance agreement with retirees and people currently employed could be one way to improve the city’s finances. Currently, neither group contributes to their health insurance premiums. The commission estimates \$1 billion to \$2 billion in added revenue if the two groups were made to contribute.

Doulis also recommended the city “take a harder look at the capital budget,” since numerous capital projects—including \$40 billion planned for 2012–2016—have increased the debt, and in turn debt service fees.

The ‘budget dance’

Mayor Michael Bloomberg presented the \$68.7 billion preliminary budget in February. Since then, the City Council has been working on staving off cuts to numerous areas including firehouses, and multiple child and youth service areas.

But working all spring on budget restorations to areas that are often restored at the last minute may have left other areas unaddressed.

“What’s not addressed in the budget is the fact that we still have a very weak economy, with sky high unemployment and a lot of family economic distress, caused by the recession and a weak recovery,” said James Parrott, deputy director and chief economist at the Fiscal Policy Institute. “There’s very little in the budget that addresses those hardships that exist in the city economy—that should have been the real focus of the budget discussion this spring, rather than the usual budget dance.”

Seven city agencies that deal with human services, including the Department of Aging, the Administration for Child Services, and the Health and Hospitals Corporation “have basically the same amount of funding they had before the recession,” Parrott said. “But that hasn’t kept pace with the inflation that’s occurred since then.”

With 7 to 8 percent inflation, the seven agencies have “endured effectively real cuts in their spending levels,” Parrott said, “whereas many other areas of the budget have grown by twice the rate of inflation since the recession started.”

Constrictions overall for funding partly stem from decreased state funding, said Parrott, such as steep cuts in the two previous years to the city's Department of Education, which has led to the city spending more on the department.

With only limited information available about the proposed budget changes "there's still a lot to learn about the details, for the child care, for example," said George Sweeting, director of the Independent Budget Office.

Before City Council votes on the final budget, a resolution that itemizes all the restorations will be made public. A vote is expected this week.

Read More Here: <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/united-states/budget-agreement-restores-firehouse-library-after-school-funds-257372-print.html>



City's funding formula cuts Head Start in Kingsbridge

By Sarina Trangle

June 27, 2012

Come August, dozens of families with children enrolled in the Kingsbridge Heights Community Center's Head Start program could find themselves without a slot in the program that will replace it.

A child care consolidation plan announced by Mayor Michael Bloomberg last spring will mean that KHCC's program for 3- to 5-year-olds will transition from a 40-seat Head Start program to a 61-slot city-run Child Care program this fall.

The mayor's EarlyLearn NYC initiative streamlines child care services for low-income families under one umbrella group, and seeks to add more educational components.

But the city's new method of determining which neighborhoods are most in need gave KHCC a "moderate" rating, according to the Administration of Children's Services, leaving the city with no more Head Start funding by the time KHCC's proposal was considered. KHCC was still one of 149 providers offered a contract under EarlyLearn NYC but will now only be offering Child Care for the 3- to 5-year-old age group.

Executive staff said the new program is not a good fit for Kingsbridge Heights families.

Head Start is free, while Child Care charges parents on a sliding scale based on their income and family size. The city only gives Child Care subsidy vouchers to low-income parents who work or are enrolled in school, which Batya Novick, director of KHCC's family services, said may leave undocumented children stranded.

"A lot of undocumented folks have under-the-table jobs. Their employers are not going to be willing to disclose this," Ms. Novick said. "Head Start allows for free pre-school so that they're really ready for kindergarten. It was accessible to all in our community, which is very, very diverse."

This year KHCC served 97 children in its Head Start program by allowing some of the 40 seats to be shared among part-time attendees. Ms. Novick said that will not be possible under the new program, which will mean 36 fewer children can be accommodated even though the program officially provides more seats than the previous one.

KHCC Executive Director Giselle Melendez-Susca said the city previously prioritized zip codes by borough but began highlighting zip codes most in need of child care city-wide when the EarlyLearn NYC was initiated. She said the new method overlooked pockets of need, such as Kingsbridge Heights.

“We’ve been providing Head Start here for 37 years in conjunction with a federal grant to do Early Head Start, so those two combined allow us to do a nice transition of quality care from 0 to age 5,” Ms. Melendez-Susca said. “That’s been decimated.”

While Head Start comes with federal mandates and benchmarks for what skills 3 to 5-year-olds should learn, KHCC said the Child Care program is similar to day care. The center has pledged to continue as many Head Start initiatives as possible this fall, but said limited funding from the city may force them to make cuts.

The city released a statement defending EarlyLearn NYC as an initiative that “will deliver high quality early care and education” to children of working families across the city.

Under EarlyLearn NYC, KHCC will manage a Head Start program in Eastchester. However, several Kingsbridge Heights families said commuting across the borough would be too expensive or time consuming.

Christina Ordonez, 40, said her search for a new educational program for her 3-year-old has been overwhelming because nearby Head Start programs were already full. Ms. Ordonez, whose first language is Spanish, said she’s struggling to find the time to check out programs and overcome a language barrier when speaking with prospective teachers.

“I’m working from 8 to 4:30. I can’t watch her. I’m working for her, to provide for her,” Ms. Ordonez said of her 3-year-old daughter who has a speech development problem. “These kids can’t stay at home with nothing to do. These kids need to be able to expand and grow ... especially children with special needs.”

Yeniset Estrella, 34, of Kingsbridge Heights, said the KHCC Head Start helped her 15-year-old and 5-year-old daughters test into Gifted & Talented programs. Now, she’s worried she won’t be able to afford the \$200-a-week cost of similar early childhood education programs when her toddler Xavier ages out of the Early Head Start program next year.

“He’s going to have to go next year. He’s going to lose everything because he’s going to be sitting in front of the TV all day,” Ms. Estrella said. “When you abandon your child, when you deprive your child from things that are needed, the city comes and takes them away and says, ‘You’re neglected.’ But what is it called when the city deprives them of an education? ... The mayor is depriving them of an education.”

Read More Here: http://riverdalepress.com/stories/City-funding-formula-cuts-Head-Start-in-Kingsbridge-,50562?page=1&content_source=



Bloomberg's Latest Bargaining Chips? Low-Income Children

By Molly Knefel,

June 28, 2012

After months of threatening New York City's poorest communities with devastating cuts to after-school and child-care services, Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced Monday that he would restore funding for those programs rather than eliminating them. The announcement came at the last hour, with less than a week to spare before the final deadline. Bloomberg's original Executive Budget, announced in May, would have left as many as 47,000 children without after-school or child care, most of them low-income children of color.

The mayor's announcement is great news for the children of New York City, who, according to press releases from the mayor's office, will actually have more after-school spots in 2013 than they did this past school year. But the fact that these programs won't be destroyed after all shouldn't let Bloomberg off the hook for what he was about to do. Last week, the Campaign for Children released an [utterly damning case study](#) highlighting exactly how disproportionately these cuts would have affected the city's highest-need children. Looking at those numbers, it's difficult to imagine how Bloomberg could have, for any amount of time, justified such unapologetic decimation of services for these communities.

Under the original budget, over 200 schools were set to lose after-school programs: 191 elementary and middle schools and 42 high schools. The four neighborhoods that would have experienced the most cuts -- up to a 91% loss in service -- were Washington Heights, Bushwick, Williamsburg/Greenpoint and the Morrisania section of the Bronx. The first three of those neighborhoods have the highest rates of childhood obesity in the city; low-income students, [for a litany of reasons](#), are more likely to suffer from poor nutrition, obesity and related health problems, and the after-school programs Bloomberg planned to cut mandate regular physical activity, as well as provide healthy food.

In Morrisania, well over half of the children live under the federal poverty level, and the three other neighborhoods with the highest child poverty rates (Mott Haven, Brownsville and University Heights) were also bracing for massive losses -- as were the five neighborhoods in the city with the highest unemployment rates. The cuts were overwhelmingly concentrated in the Bronx, in schools where less than 30% of the students are reading at or above grade level and with high populations of English Language Learners.

Now, though, according to the mayor, "Tens of thousands of families can rest assured that the daycare, early childhood education and after-school programs they depend on, will be there for them." Of course, Bloomberg only declared that parents could "rest assured" after many of the city's after-school programs had already closed for the year -- after thousands of children were forced to say goodbye to the after-

school teachers they have known since kindergarten, thinking there would be nothing to come back to next year. And after parents spent all of May and most of June panicking, worried they would have to [quit their jobs](#) in order to care for their small children.

I work as an after-school teacher at an elementary school in the Bronx, where most of the staff has been there for four years or more and where the children return year after year. When my boss, at our End-of-Year Dance and Drama show, announced to parents that we were one of the lucky programs that would survive despite the planned cuts, they lined up immediately to sign their children up. Earlier in the year, we'd been informed that our source of funding had been cut, and we spent the spring unsure of whether we would come back. The day I found out about the cuts, I left my co-worker in the planning room as she cried about the news. I walked out into the hallway and immediately ran into a first-grader, a boy who had been in our program the previous year but wasn't currently enrolled.

"I miss you!" he said as he hugged me. "My mommy said I get to be in program again next year. I can't wait. I love after-school."

I swear, I thought he was a plant, set up to make me even sadder at the prospect of losing the program.

That was in February, and in April -- on the day of a student art and poetry show -- the staff found out that an alternate source of funding had come through for our program. My co-workers cheered, hugged and toasted with plastic wine glasses of grape juice we had been serving at the gallery. It was an appropriate way for teachers to celebrate. And last week, as we said goodbye to our crying students (one boy teased his classmate and his teacher for crying and then burst into tears a minute later), we had the great comfort of being able to say to each other, "We'll see you next year."

But in 233 schools around the city, teachers couldn't say that. They thought they weren't coming back.

The fact that there is funding for next year after all is fantastic news, obviously. So far, though, it is unclear whether existing programs will survive intact or be restructured, as neither the mayor nor the city council has yet released any information about where the funding will be allocated. I truly hope that parents in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Washington Heights are indeed "resting assured" now, as Mayor Bloomberg instructed, but I wonder whether the mayor has any idea what it feels like to spend two months fearing, literally, for your children's future. I wonder if he knows what it's like to be an after-school teacher in your own neighborhood and fear the loss of your job and the community you've been part of for years.

I wonder if he knows what it's like to be the sixth-grader who approached me outside of school earlier this year. He was a former student of mine, and his third-grade sister had been waitlisted at our program due to a lack of spots.

"I got into the after-school program at my new school," he told me, "but I can't go unless my sister gets into the one here. What am I supposed to do with her? I can't let her wander around the neighborhood by herself."

Bloomberg was less than five days away from pushing thousands of young children of color out of their schools and away from adult supervision – not to mention academic and arts enrichment, including art galleries, poetry readings and dance shows. He was ready to send thousands of young boys of color out into the streets of a city that stopped and frisked more young black men last year than there are young black men actually living here. This revised budget is a success only in the sense that it avoids a

catastrophe that Bloomberg himself was about to create. The threats to these services are part of a larger landscape in New York City and around the country, where the burden of austerity and “tightening our belts” rests primarily on poor communities and people of color.

Bloomberg had his finger on the button to make the lives of tens of thousands of children and their families exponentially worse, and he didn’t press it. But he was ready to, and those populations were collateral that he was ready to sacrifice. The children who would have suffered may look very little like Mayor Bloomberg’s kids, but they are kids nonetheless -- not bargaining chips. And despite this overwhelming victory for the kids themselves, we must continue to scrutinize just what kind of leader would even think of sacrificing our city’s most vulnerable citizens in the name of a balanced budget.

Read More Here:

http://www.alternet.org/story/156066/bloombergs_latest_bargaining_chips_lowincome_children?page=1

City Council, mayor reach \$68.5 billion budget deal

By GERREN KEITH GAYNOR

June 29, 2012

Mayor Michael Bloomberg and City Council members came to a \$68.5 billion budget deal for fiscal year 2013. The budget, which goes into effect July 1, includes no tax increases, revenue from an improving economy and additional funding to offset previously proposed cuts, according to a press release from the mayor's office. The budget deal came just five days before the June 30 deadline, which marks the end of fiscal year 2012.

The budget remains balanced through the use of saved prior-year agency resources and increased revenue from strong growth in the technology, film and television, tourism and higher education sectors. The deal is a surprising turn of events after Bloomberg proposed a gamut of cuts to firefighters, police officers, teachers and the like. The new budget will spare job cuts, at least temporarily.

The budget set in place for fiscal year 2013 includes expected revenue of \$635 million from the sale of new taxi medallions, which is currently being held up in court. If the auction is postponed or canceled, the city would be forced to institute cutbacks. For the time being, the expected taxi revenue will allow the city to kick out funds to some of the most vulnerable sectors.

Under the new agreement, the city will add \$75 million more to child care and out-of-school programs than was in the previous year's budget. Cuts to child care and out-of-school services was a thorny issue, prompting much public contempt from parents, teachers and advocates. The increase is far more favorable than what Bloomberg previously had in mind, which was to slash half of the city-sponsored after-school programs serving low-income working families and more than a third of child care.

"With this budget, all of us in City Hall have made it clear that the children of New York City are without a doubt our No. 1 priority," said City Council Speaker Christine Quinn in a press release. "Working parents need to have their children and cared for while they are at work. Children need to receive a high-quality educational experience at an early age. We are creating a program that responds to both of these needs.

"We are saying that child care can and must be part of a lifelong education that continues with pre-K through kindergarten and that ultimately leads to every child graduating high school ready for college."

Council Members Melissa Mark-Viverito of Manhattan and Letitia James of Brooklyn, while pleased with the additional funding provided to child care services, expressed concern that the contracting process would favor large providers at the expense of neighborhood ones.

The new budget will also increase the number of teachers in the school system by roughly 1,000.

One important service to the community that will not see extra funding are city libraries, which Bloomberg said will have around the same level of current funding. However, Councilman Domenic Recchia Jr., who serves as chair of the Finance Committee, said that it would actually be less, though it is unclear how much less it will be. In his preliminary budget, Bloomberg proposed cutting \$100 million from public libraries, which would have forced about a dozen locations to close down and the remaining to close for an extra day or two a week.

Councilman Charles Barron stated, “I’m never satisfied with the city budget because it is a budget that reflects cuts from last year or additional cuts this year. While they do make restorations to child care and others, it’s a part of the annual budget dance. These restorations don’t meet the needs of the people in New York City who need child care for instance. We need enhancement, not just restorations. The child care need — only 27 percent, they say—of the people who need child care actually get it in New York City. There are so many families that are not going to be receiving child care that are actually in need and that’s a shame with a \$68 billion budget.”

Barron continued, “When I started off in the City Council, there were 83,000 summer youth employment slots. We’re down to 55,000. This budget restores the number from last year.

“There are daycare voucher slots with 7,700, they’re now down to 4,400. The value of the voucher is higher but the amount of them went down. So while they did restore bank, I’m not pleased when we have \$68.5 billion and we still have inadequate child care services, we still have inadequate youth services, employment services and other kinds of youth services. We still have a state capital that is billions of dollars, but we won’t build youth centers, but we will build the stadiums.”

The vote for the budget will take place at the stated meeting on Thursday, June 28.

“I don’t intend to vote for it [the budget],” Barron said. “I think about \$13 million cuts to public libraries. They say there won’t be any layoffs and there won’t be any cuts in services, but there may be attrition where they won’t be able to hire added staff that they need.”

As for the sale of taxi medallions, the recent congressional candidate said, “By law, the budget has to pass by June 30. Then they’ll tell us in November that we have a shortfall and there will be more cuts coming. I can almost assure you. It happens every year. I’m sick and tired of this annual budget dance in the richest city in the world where we can’t treat the neediest people in the city better with this multibillion-dollar budget. In November, they’re going to say anticipated revenue did not come in and therefore we’re going to cut more.”

Read More Here: http://www.amsterdamnews.com/politics_noir/city-council-mayor-reach-billion-budget-deal/article_d6a09582-c153-11e1-b0fe-0019bb2963f4.html

WALL STREET JOURNAL

NYC budget uncertainty could lead to cuts later

Samantha Gross, Associated Press

June 30, 2012

NEW YORK — New York City officials have concluded their annual budget dance with an agreement that preserves child care, classrooms and other threatened programs, but uncertainty surrounding parts of the plan could lead to more than \$600 million in cuts midway through the year.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg and City Council Speaker Christine Quinn sealed their deal with a handshake Monday, and by the time the council formally approved the \$68.5 billion budget on Thursday, advocates and legislators were crowing about the city services that had been saved. Low-income child care programs were restored, as was money to keep libraries open five days a week. Twenty fire companies were taken off the chopping block.

But the deal hinges in part on \$635 million in income from the sale of taxi medallions this year and \$825 million more in income from sales over the following two years. That money may never materialize, depending on the outcome of a lawsuit accusing the mayor of illegally bypassing the City Council to get state lawmaker approval for a plan to sell more medallions and begin licensing livery cab drivers to allow them to accept street hails in less-trafficked areas of the city.

A judge has promised to rule on that lawsuit quickly, but a ruling in either direction could be followed by a lengthy appeals process. City officials have said they expect to ultimately win the case, but if it becomes clear the \$635 million in sales won't happen before June 30, 2013, the budget will have to be adjusted through cutbacks or new revenue. The city adjusts its financial plan several times throughout the year to reflect changing fiscal realities.

If the taxi sales are allowed to move forward, there's some question whether the medallion auctions will bring in as much revenue as the city is anticipating. Originally, the city projected the sales would earn the city \$1 billion for 2,000 medallions, but the budget deal raised the estimate to \$1.46 billion. Officials said that by selling the medallions in separate auctions over three years, they expected to boost the price.

Former deputy mayor Randy Mastro, a lawyer representing the plaintiffs, scoffed at the administration's projections, arguing that the plan to expand livery cab operations and add to the city's yellow cabs would skew the balance between taxi supply and demand.

"They're proposing to flood the market with more medallions than have ever been added at one time," he said. "That has an effect on how much people would be willing to pay for medallions."

City officials call their estimates conservative. They are expecting, on average, \$730,000 per medallion. This year, owners reselling their medallions have been netting on average \$700,000 to \$1 million. Since 1937, only 1,450 new medallions have been sold, bringing the total number of city cabs to about 13,000.

The budget plan relies on another uncertain deal. The city has already planned how it will spend \$300 million that it will get only if the city and its teachers union can reach a deal on teacher evaluations by January.

Budget experts suggested that any midyear cutbacks probably wouldn't be targeted at the programs said to be saved in this budget deal.

Instead, said Doug Turetsky, chief of staff at the city's Independent Budget Office, Bloomberg has traditionally handled shortfalls through modest cuts of a few percent from each agency. Details of those slices are often announced in November.

And, he said, Bloomberg has often been fairly conservative in his revenue estimates, so additional money could be taken from the city's pot of tax income — if instability in the world's economy doesn't hit the city's revenue too hard.

A significant boost in revenue would help the city's coffers. The Bloomberg administration projects that for the budget that will be negotiated next year, the city is facing a shortfall of \$2.5 billion.

Read More Here: <http://online.wsj.com/article/APecccc2290e7214bdbacea2a535bb8da48.html>



New York City Officials Seal Budget Deal

July 1, 2012



New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg – Jun 28, 2012 (credit: Kristen Artz / Mayor's Office)

NEW YORK (AP) – New York City officials have concluded their [annual budget dance](#) with an agreement that preserves child care, classrooms and other threatened programs, but uncertainty surrounding parts of the plan could lead to more than \$600 million in cuts midway through the year.

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Read More Here: <http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2012/07/01/new-york-city-officials-seal-budget-deal/>

Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Restores Library And Childcare Funds

by Laura Vladimirova

July 2nd, 2012



Source: Pen Waggener via Wikimedia Commons

In a recent **Stoop Stories**, librarian Rita Meade pleaded for the restoration of funds for New York’s public libraries. We’re happy to report that the new 2013 budget keeps library funds intact. Further, money in the budget has also been put aside for **after-school childcare**.

The final budget restores \$25 million in city funding for the Library, which would have been 33 percent of their operating budget and would have signified staff layoffs and reduced library services, according to **Only the Blog Knows Brooklyn**.

“We are very grateful the budget agreed to by the Mayor and Speaker restores funding for libraries and I want to thank Chairman Dominic Recchia and the entire Brooklyn delegation for their continued support of Brooklyn Public Library. The adopted budget will allow the Library to maintain our existing service levels and avoid layoffs,” said Linda E. Johnson, President and CEO of Brooklyn Public Library.

As for after-school childcare, Councilman Vincent Gentile said the \$68.5 billion for various services allotted by Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the City Council a “grand slam” for working families.

The deal, Gentile said, saved firehouses and senior centers and left many after-school programs in operation for next year.

After-school programs at P.S. 186, the Dr. Irving A Gladstone School at 7601 19th Avenue; P.S. 229, the Dyker School at 1400 Benson Avenue; and P.S. 200, the Benson School at 1940 Benson Avenue and others are all safe, according to the **Bay Ridge Journal**.

Read More Here: <http://www.bensonhurstbean.com/2012/07/fiscal-year-2013-budget-restores-library-and-childcare-funds/>



A Letter From Councilman Vincent Gentile On The New Fiscal Year Budget And What It Means For Our Community

by **Laura Vladimirova**

July 3rd, 2012

Councilman Vincent Gentile Writes:

Even during these tough economic times, this was a banner year for our great city. My colleagues and I came to a \$68.5 billion balanced budget deal five days before the deadline. The budget, which will go into effect on July 1, comes without tax increases and staves off previously proposed cuts – including all of our firehouses, senior centers, libraries and after-school programs.

I proudly commended Mayor Bloomberg, Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn, Finance Chair Domenic M. Recchia, Jr. and all of my colleagues in the New York City Council for coming together and delivering a grand slam for hardworking families all across New York City. Not only will this budget protect our firehouses and our after-school programs but it will restore an unprecedented \$90 million in proposed cuts to New York City's libraries while saving 637 library jobs with no service disruptions or changes.

This budget is a huge win for Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, Bath Beach and Bensonhurst. The neighborhoods I serve don't qualify for many city services but we stood our ground, banded together and made sure the Mayor didn't cut the few services we do qualify for.

In addition to saving Heartshare's Beacon program at McKinley I.S. 259, some 1,500 children across four schools within Community Boards 10 and 11 have also been spared as after-school funding for the programs at PS 102/The Bayview School, PS 186 / Dr. Irving A Gladstone School, PS 229/Dyker and PS 200/The Benson School has all been restored. New York is one of the most expensive cities to live in and after-school programming and childcare is of utmost concern for most working parents. The new budget will increase the number of teachers in the school system by roughly 1,000 while adding \$75 million more to child care and out-of-school programs than the previous year's budget.

Additionally, all the firehouses in our community were saved. This welcomed news comes on the heels of a terrible four-alarm blaze in Bay Ridge that left four families displaced. Our community knows firsthand that the FDNY is invaluable and I am very proud to say that even in times of fiscal uncertainty, public safety remains our city's top priority.

Speaking of public safety, I have also secured \$3 million for capital improvements within our community. These improvements will include state-of-the-art security surveillance cameras for the 68th Precinct to mount around the neighborhood where necessary. Currently our district does not have any of

these permanent “eyes” on the street but now we’ll have several permanent cameras and they’ll all be monitored by the NYPD’s Technical Assistance Response Unit (TARU).

In the areas of education and recreation, I proudly teamed up with my colleague Councilman David Greenfield to fund a \$500,000 renovation for the library at PS/IS 180 SEEALL Academy. I was also able to allocate \$1.2 million towards the renovation of Patrick O’Rourke – Dyker Heights Playground on 81st Street between 10th and 11th Avenues. Yet probably the biggest project that is fully funded in the budget in the \$2.1 million renovation of the McKinley Park ball field at 78th Street & Fort Hamilton Parkway. With the help and support of Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, this ball field will transform from its current cracked asphalt surface to a new state-of-the-art synthetic turf and when done will serve as home base for the youngsters of the St. Anselm’s Little League.

I was also able to secure expense funding for local groups – first time funding allocated to new community groups like the Francesco Loccisano Memorial Foundation and the Shore Road Parks Conservancy as well as continued funding to our Veteran’s Groups, Parent-Teacher Associations, Senior Centers, Scout Troops and many others. Altogether, over 120 groups that provide services in Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, Bath Beach and Bensonhurst received funding.

In 2009-2010, I secured capital funding for the new recreational Eco-Dock to be built and opened in the next year at the 69th Street Pier. This year I added to the new budget funding to coordinate programming at this exciting new location in Bay Ridge. This Eco-Dock is the first one built in the City and will help open up the shorefront for boating, kayaking and more.

This budget did not arrive without many difficult choices but all in all this was a great year and I am very satisfied with the FY 2013 budget because it addresses and includes support for many priorities shared by the Mayor and the Council. I believe we’ve put together a budget that is fiscally responsible but one that also shows our unwillingness to sacrifice our most fundamental services even during difficult economic times.

Have a safe and happy July 4th and a wonderful summer!

Read More Here: <http://www.bensonhurstbean.com/2012/07/a-letter-from-councilman-vincent-gentile-on-the-new-fiscal-year-budget-and-what-it-means-for-our-community/>