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## **20 Elected Officials Join with Public School Advocates to Release New Report Detailing Failure of Mayor's School Closings Policy**

***“School Closures: A Shell Game with Students” shows that lower percentages of high-needs students at Bloomberg's new schools inflated performance***

***Elected officials, advocates: school closings is a failed policy which just moves low-performing students around instead of educating them***

(January 27, 2012 – New York, NY) Twenty elected officials joined the City's largest public school and parent-led organizations today on the steps of City Hall to release a report with new statistics detailing the failure of Mayor Bloomberg's education reforms—particularly his school closings policy. The group demanded immediate action to suspend and reverse failed policies.

The report provides hard evidence that key Bloomberg “reforms” such as school closings have not produced the gains that the Mayor has claimed over the past decade. Elected officials and advocates today called the closings policy a failed tactic that just moves low-performing students from one school to another instead of educating them, inflating the success of new schools. These high-needs students – self-contained special education, over-age and other historically lower-performing students – make up a smaller percentage of student populations at many of the new schools founded by the administration. After ten years of this failed policy, New York City is left with a huge college readiness gap by race, income and school, the report concludes.

The final argument against the mayor's closing schools policy came this year, elected officials said today, when the City moved to close 11 of its own schools started under Bloomberg's watch—schools that had levels of high-needs students comparable to closed and older existing schools.

State Senators Perkins, Espaillat, Montgomery and Adams, Assemblymembers J. Rivera, Jeffries, Espinal, Ortiz, Perry, Gibson and Council Members Rodriguez, Jackson, Chin, Eugene, Williams, James, Sanders, Levin and Brewer joined students, parents and advocates from the Coalition for Educational Justice, NY Communities for Change and students and parents from closing schools at the event today.

“Mayor Bloomberg's Department of Education should be ashamed of the true college readiness of the Black and Latino students it prematurely graduates from the New York City school system,” said Assemblyman Keith Wright of Harlem. “When only 13% of Black and Latino students are ready for college after high school, the future is bleak for our communities. No longer will we allow this Mayor to crow about his success at managing our school system, the time has come for justice in the classroom and if Mayor Bloomberg can't deliver, we need someone who can!”

“The question of achieving superior education is the question of the 21st century,” said Council Member James Sanders. “We should not allow ideology, dogmatism, or plain stubbornness to blind us from the fact that the current system is failing far too many students in New York City. Let us be bold for the sake of our children and take a closer look at all on the issues in play in New York. Let there be no sacred cows, and no apologies preventing us from providing every student with a quality education.”

“Closing down schools does not solve our problems,” said Assemblyman Jose Rivera. “You solve our problems by investing in our schools and most of all in our students.”

“When it comes to college and career-readiness, Mayor Bloomberg has failed us,” said Council Member Jumaane Williams. “When it comes to closing the racial achievement gap, Mayor Bloomberg has failed us. When it comes to

because of the arrogance of this administration. It's clear that the "Education Mayor" has not lived up to his self-appointed name, and it is also clear that mayoral control has failed.”

“The reality today is that a high school degree is not enough for the average student to compete for the jobs that are being created, especially as our city continues to attract more technology-based jobs,” said Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez. “However, it's not enough to just say ‘you need to go to college’. If we really want young New Yorkers to have the opportunity to get these jobs, we have to make sure that our schools not only prepare them to enroll in college, but actually prepare them to succeed.”

“Mayor Bloomberg promised us time and time again that he will successfully revitalize and improve of our vast New York City school system,” said Council Member Letitia James. “However, Mayor Bloomberg has managed to dismantle community input into school decision-making, increase the number of charter schools within the system while closing out numerous traditional schools, and decrease the administration's transparency and accountability for major school changes while our students are left to fend for themselves. We as public officials are charged with the duty to ensure a proper education for our children and Mayor Bloomberg has undoubtedly failed our youth. I stand strong with my colleagues and school communities in bringing these failures to light for hopes of a better tomorrow.”

“Mayor Bloomberg has had a decade to improve our schools and make us proud, but the fact is that his policies have failed,” said Council Member Steve Levin. “Now we know that these policies have done the most harm to the Black and Latino students in our City. Thirteen percent is a failing grade and there's no excuse for it. Now this Mayor wants to close schools and fire teachers in schools that have been rated "A" and "B" schools by the Department of Education. I join with my friends at New York Communities for Change in calling on this Mayor to face the realities of our school system. We have good teachers and we have good students. It is the policies of Bloomberg's Department of Education that have let us down. Now is the time for honesty. Now is the time to get our schools and our students on the path to success.”

“I believe the Department of Education should make every effort to prevent schools from closing and provide assistance to every school so every student is fully prepared to attend college,” said Council Member Mathieu Eugene. “Closing a school can cause major disruptions in the educational life of students and their parents, and the Department of Education should work collaboratively with all schools to ensure that students are ready for college.”

“The latest information available about the New York City public school system shows once again that the administration’s claims of success are greatly overblown and plainly misleading,” said Assemblywoman Vanessa L. Gibson. “Instead the data clearly documents the disturbing reality that children from families of color, particularly African-Americans and Latinos, remain at the back of the bus when it comes to educational achievement.”

Parents and Students have labeled Mayor Bloomberg as “Mayor 13%” for his administration’s failure to prepare 87 percent of black and Latino students for college. Just one-in-four students overall are prepared for college under Bloomberg, and just 39 percent of public high school graduates last year reported they would be attending four-year colleges the following fall.

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