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State Senator Jessica Ramos, Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas, public school parents, and Advocates Oppose the Proposed NYC FY 23 Budget Cuts to Schools



Photo credit: Elder Ordoñez

JACKSON HEIGHTS, NY – On Friday morning, State Senator Jessica Ramos, Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas, Make the Road NY, the Alliance for Quality Education (AQE) and Desis Rising Up & Moving (DRUM) rallied outside of Public School 69, the Jackson Heights School, to condemn the proposed budget cuts to New York City (NYC) schools in the proposed FY 2023 NYC Budget. The elected officials and advocates called for a reversal of the proposed cuts before the budget goes into effect on July 1st.

The public school parents slammed Mayor Adams for proposing the cuts to schools citing [figures by the Department of Education](#) such as \$484,342 in cuts, which is expected to be cut from P.S 69 in Jackson Heights. They pointed to funding that was fought for by the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, which resulted in New York State committing to fully funding schools and \$12 billion from the state budget that was allocated to NYC schools this year. Advocates also noted that only \$3 billion of the \$7.6 billion that New York City has received in federal stimulus funding had been spent.

The legislators also raised that these cuts are concerning in the context of the upcoming contract negotiations between UFT and the city, [slated to begin in September](#). A report released last February by State Comptroller DiNapoli highlighted that New York is not immune to the mass exodus of teachers that followed the pandemic. According to the report, between June 2020 and November 2021, the city lost 1,992 teachers, a number that is only set to increase as schools face these cuts.

The group shared that these cuts would mean cuts in jobs for teachers, social workers, counselors, arts and music programming and more. They demanded that the cuts be restored or a plan for the Mayor to fill in the gaps and to ensure that jobs are protected.

Quotes:

“We’re standing now in front of my children’s school, which is looking at an over \$400,000 cut. PS 89, a few blocks over, is getting \$1.3 million cut from its budget. This community was the epicenter of the pandemic - these children have gone through unfathomable loss, and for the Mayor to hide behind underenrollment rather than look for opportunities to ensure that we keep teachers from leaving the field, that we boost up mental health resources, and ensure that our children recover learning losses, is reprehensible,” said **State Senator Jessica Ramos**. “We’re not talking about fewer textbooks, or a few operational cuts here and there - these cuts reflect teachers, support staff, and critical programs. We did not fight tooth and nail to bring ever penny of Foundation Aid back to Queens, only for the Mayor and our colleagues in the Council to cut funding to public schools.”

“Over six million dollars will be cut from New York City schools in my Assembly district, which includes the neighborhoods of Corona, East Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, and Woodside. That means jobs for teachers and social workers will be cut and schools will be even more overwhelmed than they already are. This community is made up by a majority of communities of color and immigrant families. The proposed cuts by the Mayor are unconscionable at a time when we are trying to keep our children safe and healthy in our schools. We demand that he and the Council get back to the table and restore these cuts,” said **Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas**.

“The more resources you put into Education, the more you get out of it. What kind of leadership would decide to cut education budgets, especially at a time when we have a budget surplus? My son’s school lost \$950,000, and Elmhurst has the most overcrowded school in the city. No wonder the Mayor and leadership rammed this anti-people budget through in two hours without any transparency and discussion. Who were they trying to hide from?” said **Fahd Ahmed, Executive Director DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving, and parent of a PS 007 student in Elmhurst**

“I’m flabbergasted by these proposed cuts. My children go to a small school which for years has always had to juggle a small budget. A neighboring school will have to manage a 24% cut in their budget, which is more than \$1 million. This is not right. We demand the Mayor and Council restore the \$215 million in cuts to education and fully fund our schools,” said **Simone Dornbach, a parent leader from the Alliance for Quality Education and Community Education Council member of District 28**.

“As a NYC public school parent, former PTA parent and an SLT member, I have seen time and time again our principals, teachers and children being failed by leaders who always choose to cut education spending when our schools need it the most. After two years of a devastating pandemic, we should be investing more into our schools, more into social emotional support, more into equipment, more into mental health support for both teachers and students and yet our schools’ budgets are being cut again. The cuts have real and devastating consequences— our schools are having to collapse classrooms, get rid of “extras” like music or art, and excess, which really means fire teachers and in the end, the schools that suffer most are our children in underserved communities. Where is the equity this administration is talking about? These cuts are a slap in the face to them and to NYC parents and families. NYC must do better so that children in all schools in every zip code can thrive,” said **Diana Limongi, a public school parent and member of Queens Community Board 1**.



Photo credit: Elder Ordoñez

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