

## **New York City Council Hearings on Resolutions 156 and 157 in Support of School Transformation Zone & Expanded/Redesigned School Day for Children**

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Charles Dickens Tale of Two Cities begins "it was the best of times; it was the worst of times". For far too many students and families, today's school system can only be described as the best of times or the worst of times as there may be only one city, but there are surely two school systems: those that thrive and those that falter. Although I reside in persistently under performing Bronx school District 9 I am happy and fortunate to enjoy the best of times for my two high school children. I am also very sad and it is rather unfortunate that children who live next door to, above, below and across the street from my family are experiencing the worst of times as most of them attend local schools that are scheduled to be closed.

The prevailing culture of viewing schools as items of planned obsolescence is a design for imminent failure. Despite its current popularity, the practice of closing schools does not contribute to the greater good. In fact, research has shown that school closures have negative impacts on both the students they serve as well as the community at large because of the disproportionate numbers of high needs students that end up in the surviving schools. Newly created small schools are usually ill equipped to serve these students. It is this kind of musical school chairs that contributed to the demise of the schools that have been slated for closure. What remains are schools filled with all the children who have been left behind.

Resolutions 156 and 157 call for the establishment of a School Transformation Zone to improve low performing schools and to redesign and expand the school day for children, both of these are positive intervention strategies to turnaround schools and avoid school closure. They are historic in nature because they are based on a model proposed by the NYC Coalition for Educational Justice of which I am a proud Parent Leader. Further, these resolutions provide the tenets for leveling the playing fields by enabling schools that continually hover on the brink of under performance to receive necessary support to avoid possible future dissolution.

I strongly urge members of the Council to join Chairman Robert Jackson and 70 other elected officials, unions and community based organizations to lend their support of behalf of this critical legislation; not solely because of where they emanated but because they make sense and are good for schools and schools children. The time to put an end to the tales of two school systems is now. Let's ensure that the delivery of public education in our city is the best of times for all students and that all schools become great schools.

Thank you.