
MANHATTAN DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

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SPECIAL EDUCATION

Department of Education

Provide “4410” preschools and “853” schools for students with disabilities with tuition increases comparable to increases for general education programs.

Address the 853 and 4410 schools’ staff recruitment and retention crisis by increasing the current 4410 and 853 Recruitment and Retention funding by \$14.7 million.

Since 2012, our New York State Education Department approved special education schools have seen half the revenue increases provided to public school districts. This inadequate funding is fiscal discrimination against children who have some of the most intense and specialized needs.

These school programs are often confused with a group of schools where families pay tuition and sue the school district for reimbursement. These are not those schools, but instead are programs that serve students who are evaluated and then placed by their local school districts because their needs cannot be met in public school placements.

These programs are struggling to remain solvent without adequate budgets, and many have had to make the difficult decision to delay repairs, cut staff benefits, and take other emergency measures to preserve their programs. Twenty preschool special education center-based programs in New York State closed in a prior year, impacting 642 children attending a special class and another 375 children attending a special class integrated setting. Further, because of the growth of Universal PreK programs in New York City, many preschool special education staff are being recruited for better-paying positions in these new programs, which offer few inclusion opportunities for preschoolers with disabilities. Likewise, school-age special education teachers are being aggressively recruited by the public schools.

The teacher salary gap seen in our specialized school programs where students have complex educational needs that cannot be met in public school programs has reached such an acute point that staff turnover and vacancies plague these professional positions. 4410 and 853 salaries can’t compete with public school salaries, even before benefits are considered. Public school teachers in New York City make \$30,000 more than teachers in the 4410 and 853 schools.

Well-qualified staff are essential to meeting the intense program needs of these students. Staff recruitment in these programs has long relied on the passion and mission focus of staff, but the

salary difference and the high demand for trained special education teachers are too great to retain qualified staff in the 4410 and 853 programs.

EARLY INTERVENTION

Department of Health

Early Intervention rates must be increased by 4%.

Similarly to the schools but for a longer period, Early Intervention (EI) service rates have not seen a raise in twenty years, and the needs of young children and their families go unmet as a result. A modest increase of 4% is requested.

Early Intervention provides highly cost-effective developmental and therapeutic services to infants and toddlers with quantified delays, ages birth to 3, the ideal time for addressing delays and building skills to work around impairments. Studies prove that EI services have lasting benefits, increasing children's skills and decreasing their future need for costly disability-related services.

Early Intervention is in crisis as a result of being reimbursed at a lower rate today than when the program began in 1994. Such gross underfunding has forced many well-established EI providers to close. The remaining providers are dangling over a fiscal cliff, assessing daily whether they can afford to continue.