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February 28, 2020

Chancellor Richard A. Carranza
NYC Department of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chancellor Carranza:

With our world facing an unprecedented climate crisis, we welcome the announcement that all New York City municipal vehicles will be electric by 2040.

We would like to work with you to pass legislation swiftly – Introduction 455-2018 – that will ensure that this fleet transition includes the approximately 10,000 school buses contracted to transport NYC students. While these diesel and gasoline buses are not owned and operated directly by the city, they are a major component of the public transportation system.

As Chairs of City Council Committees ranging from Finance, Health, and Contracts to Transportation, Education, and Environmental Protection, we each bring our unique perspective to this issue but are united in the belief that zero-emissions school buses are a viable technology that would make New York City a leader in fighting climate change while promoting the health of drivers, students, and the public.

We also urge the Department of Education (DOE) to follow through immediately with its electric school bus pilot program, which will pave the way for a large-scale transition. Despite the \$1.25 million allocated to DOE for this purpose in Fiscal Year 2019, no electric school buses are yet in operation in the city. As the largest user of school buses in the country, we believe New York City has a unique opportunity to lead in testing and adopting these vehicles and helping to accelerate the national trend toward zero-emissions school buses.

Beyond the long-term fuel and maintenance savings, there are many reasons why phasing out diesel school buses makes sense for NYC. First and foremost are reasons of equity. In low-income communities and communities of color, poor air quality impacts public health at drastically higher rates, and school bus depots are disproportionately sited in environmental justice neighborhoods, therefore contributing to poorer air quality in those communities. School bus emissions also disproportionately impact students with disabilities, who spend larger amounts of time on school buses traveling on especially long routes.

While buses offer a vital public service, they emit large amounts of nitrogen oxide, particulate matter, and carbon dioxide into our atmosphere, putting our children and environment at risk. This is especially concerning given the majority of school children using school buses are students with disabilities. Our

children breathe this pollution into their developing lungs, causing respiratory illnesses, aggravating asthma, and exposing them to carcinogenic pollutants. Asthma is the number one cause of school absences among children and adolescents, and while adopting zero-emissions buses will not solve this epidemic, it can help. Studies have shown that school-aged children have improved test scores after switching to less-polluting technology for pupil transportation.

Zero emissions school buses are the most efficient option for protecting the health of New York’s school children, reducing the city’s air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and saving the city money in the process.

We urge the DOE to take the following actions to engage in a genuine negotiation with the Council on Introduction 455:

- Participate in a stakeholder meeting that includes representatives from Con Edison as well as electric school bus manufacturers, public health experts, and advocates.
- Conduct a transparent fiscal analysis of the legislation that includes sharing underlying data and assumptions used to calculate cost.

We, the undersigned, are committed to working with you to develop a path forward for school busing in New York City and look forward to discussing this further.

Regards,



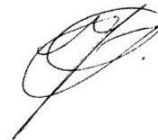
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