

**Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) Resolution Calling on the
Department of Education to Abandon the "TURNAROUND MODEL"**

WHEREAS, on January 12, 2012, Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced that New York City would take immediate action to implement a school "Turnaround" model whereby Chancellor Dennis Walcott submitted to NYSED a letter of intent to amend NYC DOE's School Improvement Grant (SIG) application;

WHEREAS, the initial SIG application submitted in July 2011 was for \$65 million in funding over the next two years, to be distributed among 44 PLA schools, 11 of which were scheduled to phase out, and 33 (including 25 high schools) were slated for or were already implementing the "Restart" or "Transformation" models under the federal school improvement guidelines;

WHEREAS, the "Turnaround" model for school improvement relies primarily on (i) replacing at least 50% of the teachers; (ii) replacing principals who have been in place for more than three years; and (iii) changing the school's name and DBN number;

WHEREAS, NYC DOE has issued Proposals for Significant Changes in School Utilization and Educational Impact Statements (EIS) for 26 schools that will, upon PEP approval on April 26, 2012 essentially "erase" 19 high schools, some with a proud history of achievements and neighborhood connections;

WHEREAS, in hearings and meetings held subsequently, it has become clear that NYC DOE's sudden shift in school improvement strategy may destabilize thousands of students in primarily large, comprehensive high schools, and — by mandating the replacement of teachers and principals according to rigid and fundamentally arbitrary criteria without offering ample professional development opportunities — penalize the very people who have made significant improvements in several of the high schools now subject to "Turnaround";

WHEREAS, NYC DOE has put forth no evidence since this decision was made that the "Turnaround" model will actually improve educational opportunities and all but eliminated this model for consideration in 2011 when other models were selected for these PLA schools;

WHEREAS, NYC DOE has taken the position that it was "forced" to adopt the Turnaround model because Restart and Transformation "are no longer available" to NYC but has pointed to no federal or state law or regulation that in fact prevents NYC DOE from continuing with the Restart and Transformation models if it so chooses; and

WHEREAS, NYC DOE has further claimed that millions in federal dollars are at stake, but has failed to acknowledge that (i) it's not certain that the "new" schools opening as replacements will in fact receive the suspended SIG funding; and (ii) to the extent that effective teachers who are not rehired and are placed into the ATR pool could cost the city millions.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Panel for Educational Policy strongly opposes the DOE's decision to implement the "Turnaround" model, since it was hastily conceived and arbitrarily proposed after spending more than six months dissecting these same PLA schools in 2011, whereby the DOE concluded that the Restart or Transformation models were proven successful with calculated vision to improve educational outcomes for the thousands of students affected. The Panel for Educational Policy also calls on Chancellor Walcott to:

- 1) Withdraw all Proposals for Significant Changes in School Utilization and EISs that involve a shift from Transformation or Restart models already underway.
- 2) Impose a moratorium on all school "Turnaround" proposals until public presentations are made in every borough reflecting on how this method will raise student achievement in lieu of existing models.
- 3) Conduct school-by-school transparent reviews of our current school improvement strategies (either Transformation or Restart) to assess which measures and programs have been effective or are showing promise in raising student achievement, while improving the school environment; these transparent reviews should include all stakeholders, but not be limited to administrators, teachers, staff, students and parents.
- 4) Examine school intervention plans that are in place under Restart or Transformation models, bearing in mind that both improvement strategies contemplate multiyear plans and that none of the 25 high schools have exceeded the time allowed under the federal guidelines, since there is now a tentative agreement on the teacher evaluation system for the next school year.
- 5) Ensure that all struggling high schools, whether or not they are undergoing federally specified reform plans, are given adequate support so that the students will not only graduate but receive the quality of education that will make them college- or career- ready.