



**MICHAEL REILLY**  
MEMBER OF ASSEMBLY  
62<sup>ND</sup> DISTRICT

April 27, 2020

Hon. Vanessa Leung  
Chairwoman, Panel for Education Policy (PEP)  
New York City Department of Education  
52 Chambers Street,  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chairwoman Leung,

I hope this letter finds you in good health during these most uncertain of times.

The times are uncertain, indeed, and millions of New Yorkers have felt the disastrous impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. New Yorkers are struggling. Many are out of work, and those still working do so knowing the risks, but do it because they have no choice and must put food on their table. That is why I am writing to you today, to urge you and the members of the Panel for Education Policy to approve the expenditures related to contracted pupil transportation, which are to be voted on at your upcoming meeting on April 29<sup>th</sup>.

If the Panel for Education Policy fails to approve those expenditures and extend the contracts, many of our city's yellow school bus companies, which are small businesses in their own right, will be forced to close, and thousands of school bus drivers, escorts, and mechanics will lose their jobs. Current estimates project that this could affect upwards of 16,000 workers, a majority of whom are racial minorities. If these men and women lose their jobs, it means they lose their health benefits, and that is something we cannot allow to happen, especially during this unprecedented health emergency.

Additionally, failing to extend the contracts would mean that our city's yellow school bus companies will not be ready in time for when school inevitably resumes. The impact of this would be felt by the entire public school system, but hit our special needs population the hardest, who rely heavily on school bus service to get to and from school. As any parent of a special needs child can tell you, missing even just one day of school, one day of services, is not an option for their child.

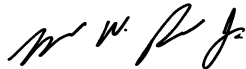
I understand that the City of New York, and in turn, its Department of Education, face a financial crisis the likes of which they have not seen in several decades. As the former President of Staten Island's Community Education Council, I completely understand the weight of the responsibility thrust upon

you and the other Panel for Education Policy members to ensure that the policies being voted on are in the best interest of the New York City School District and its 1.1 million school children. But I also understand the human side of these decisions and the detrimental impact that this decision will have on these New Yorkers, who are already facing health and economic hardship as a result of the pandemic.

Further, to terminate this contract would set a dangerous precedent that could eventually allow the City of New York to terminate any contract it sees fit, in the name of cost savings, thus jeopardizing job security for our city's contracted unionized workforce. Just think, the money saved as a result of terminating those contracts would likely have to be spent on legal defense since those unions would probably seek legal action against the City of New York.

Once again, I urge you and the members of the Panel for Education Policy to do right by thousands of New York's hardworking school bus drivers, escorts, and mechanics by approving the expenditures related to pupil transport at your upcoming meeting. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours in Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. W. Reilly".

Michael Reilly  
Member of Assembly  
62<sup>nd</sup> District

MR:pg