

# **NICOLE** **MALLIOTAKIS** **FOR MAYOR**

## EDUCATION

A Plan for New York City's Public Schools

Paid for by Nicole for New York City

Nicole attended New York City Public Schools from kindergarten through high school. She received a great education and she wants to make sure that all 1.1 million students in our city get the quality education they deserve.

**As a state legislator, Nicole voted to:**

- Establish universal Pre-K.
- Increase education spending.
- Protect student privacy.
- Eliminate testing for grades K-2.
- Successfully advocated to restore cursive instruction.
- Supported lifting caps on charter schools.
- Co-Sponsored a bill to create an education tax credit.
- Voted for legislation that requires all school to test for lead in their water supply.

New York City spent \$27 billion education in 2015 and, at \$21,980 per student, it is more expensive than any school district in the nation<sup>1</sup>. But too much of this money never actually reaches the classroom. Too much goes towards contracts with high-priced consultants and vendors and central administration while teachers are forced to pay for classroom supplies out of their own pockets, students lack up-to-date textbooks and technology, and classes are being held in trailers parked on the school playground. This is wrong and unacceptable.

Comptroller Scott Stringer reported that in Fiscal Year 2016, the Department awarded \$2.7 billion in contracts without full competition — representing 64% of the agency's total contract spending<sup>2</sup>. And earlier this year, NY1 reported that, under de Blasio, DOE spending on central administration has grown significantly<sup>3</sup>.

Nicole Malliotakis will work to reduce the bureaucracy in central administration and audit all DOE contracts to ensure that education funding is being properly spent and gets to the schools where it can do the most good. She will work with all public school parents to make sure students receive a sound basic education. Under the current administration, the Mayor has chosen to pit parents, teachers, principals, and school leaders against one another rather than finding common ground upon which to help improve teaching and learning.

---

<sup>1</sup> Selim Algar, *NY spends more money per-student than any other US state*, N.Y. POST, June 14, 2017 (<http://nypost.com/2017/06/14/ny-spends-more-money-per-student-than-any-other-us-state/>).

<sup>2</sup> *Comptroller Stringer Investigation: DOE Blatantly Violating its Own Contracting Rules*, August 11, 2017 <http://comptroller.nyc.gov/newsroom/comptroller-stringer-investigation-doe-blatantly-violating-its-own-contracting-rules/>

<sup>3</sup> Lindsey Christ, *DOE spending a lot more on central staff under de Blasio*, NY1 NEWS, January 26, 2017 (<http://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/education/2017/01/26/doe-spending-a-lot-more-on-central-staff-under-de-blasio.html>).

# Above All, New York City Schoolchildren Must Be Kept Safe.

Since the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown Connecticut, where 20 children were murdered on December 12, 2012, there have been 220 shootings on school campuses throughout the United States<sup>4</sup>. Outside of the home, the safest place for a child should be his or her school.

The majority of DOE schools are staffed with one NYPD School Safety Agent. While these agents perform admirable work, they are unarmed and simply unequipped to deal with the threat of an active shooter.

Nicole Malliotakis would direct the Police Commissioner to exercise his authority to appoint “Special Patrolmen”<sup>5</sup>, consisting of retired law enforcement personnel with impeccable records and concealed-carry licenses. These special patrolmen will be tasked with patrolling school facilities on a rotating basis, to serve as a deterrent and an ultimate line of defense against potential tragedy.

We must also ensure that our schoolchildren are safe as they travel to and from school every day. The Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) is responsible for transporting more than 150,000 students, approximately 60,000 of which are children with special needs. In September 2015, a bus carrying special-needs kindergarten students in Staten Island was lost for more than four hours. The bus operator claimed that he simply “got lost”. When the five-year old child was finally reunited with his mother, he had wet himself, was dehydrated, and possibly traumatized by the experience<sup>6</sup>. Nicole Malliotakis would require that every school bus be equipped with a global positioning system (GPS) to prevent the bus operator from becoming lost, and to locate a bus that has diverted from its normal route. If our sanitation trucks are important enough to utilize this technology, our school buses should too.

With regard to our high school students, more can be done to protect them from the terrible scourge of opioid addiction currently plaguing our city. Drug counselors in our

---

<sup>4</sup> Priya Krishnakumar and Len DeGroot, *Since Sandy Hook, a gun has been fired on school grounds nearly once a week*, L.A. TIMES, April 11, 2017 (<http://www.latimes.com/projects/la-na-school-shootings-since-newtown/>).

<sup>5</sup> N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 14-106 (e).

<sup>6</sup> Diane C. Lore, *Special needs student endures 4-hour school bus ride*, STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE, September 21, 2015 ([http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2015/09/autistic\\_son\\_stuck\\_on\\_lost\\_sch.html#incart\\_river](http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2015/09/autistic_son_stuck_on_lost_sch.html#incart_river)).

public schools have seen a recent uptick in student addicts<sup>7</sup>. Over 17,000 New York City police officers are trained to administer naloxone, the nasal spray used to rescue individuals from heroin overdoses<sup>8</sup>. Nicole Malliotakis would order naloxone training to all school safety agents as well, and equip all high schools with the life-saving tool to be readily available should the need arise.

## **The Chancellor Must Be an Educator.**

Under current law, the mayor can request a waiver from the New York State Education Commissioner to appoint a chancellor without the requisite education credentials. Nicole will only appoint an educator for this critical role. Nicole believes that the head of the largest public school system in the world must have experience both in the classroom and as an administrator to understand the challenges of our schools. In a Malliotakis Administration, those without the proper credentials will be disqualified from consideration, obviating the need for a waiver.

## **Mayoral Control of Our Schools Should Not Be Made Permanent.**

The current trend of requiring the Mayor to testify before the state legislature and request an extension of mayoral control over the New York City school system provides a necessary check on City Hall while providing a level of autonomy for the city to implement its own education policy. Nicole Malliotakis would work with the state legislature to implement a 3-year mandatory review and establish necessary accountability for her and future mayors.

---

<sup>7</sup> Ben Chapman, *New York City's opioid crisis seeps into public schools as drug counselors see uptick in student addicts*, N.Y. DAILY NEWS, July 22, 2017 (<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/new-york-city-opioid-crisis-seeps-public-schools-article-1.3347794>).

<sup>8</sup> Daniel Prendergast, *NYPD: 'We were not ready' for flood of drug overdoses*, N.Y. POST, April 6, 2017 (<http://nypost.com/2017/04/06/nypd-we-were-not-ready-for-flood-of-drug-overdoses/>).

## Consultant Contracts Require Heavier Scrutiny.

The Office of the New York City Comptroller recently released a management audit of DOE highly critical of its contract with the New York City Leadership Academy (NYCLA) for teacher and principal coaching<sup>9</sup>. According to Comptroller Stringer, 98% of sampled payments lacked basic proof that services were provided – a shocking statistic, especially when considering that over \$100 million in taxpayer funded contracts are at stake.

The Comptroller's Office also found that DOE failed to monitor \$84 million paid to vendors for services to students with disabilities<sup>10</sup>, misplaced over 2,000 laptops and tablets (valued at over \$2,000 each)<sup>11</sup>. Sadly, this is not the first time the de Blasio administration was notified of such waste. Despite a December 2014 audit showing 1,800 pieces of technology were unaccounted for<sup>12</sup>, the administration obviously made no changes to produce oversight and accountability.

If the CEO of a publicly traded company allowed this type of shoddy bookkeeping, the company shareholders would be calling for the CEO's arrest. But in Bill de Blasio's New York, the Mayor's response is likely to be, "read my lips, I don't care."

This is just the most recent example of DOE being cited by the Comptroller's office. Earlier this year, the Comptroller's Office released another audit showing that between 2010-2019 the DOE Capital Plan allocated \$997.6 million to install, maintain or enhance broadband internet and wireless service in our schools. Ten years into the project the Comptroller's Office found that 45% of middle schools that responded to a

---

<sup>9</sup> *Comptroller Stringer: DOE Paying Out Hundreds of Thousands of Dollars on Leadership Coaching Without Required Evidence It Happened*, July 30, 2017 (<https://comptroller.nyc.gov/newsroom/comptroller-stringer-doe-paying-out-hundreds-of-thousands-of-dollars-on-leadership-coaching-without-required-evidence-it-happened/>).

<sup>10</sup> Post Editorial Board, *How the Department of Education robs the city's students*, N.Y. POST, August 30, 2017 (<http://nypost.com/2017/08/30/how-the-department-of-education-robs-the-citys-students/>).

<sup>11</sup> Selim Algar, *Nearly 2,000 technology devices for students are missing*, N.Y. POST, July 19, 2017 (<http://nypost.com/2017/07/19/nearly-2k-worth-of-tech-for-students-is-missing/>).

<sup>12</sup> *Comptroller Stringer Audit Reveals Thousands Of Computers And Tablets Lost And Unused At The Department Of Education*, December 2, 2014 (<http://comptroller.nyc.gov/newsroom/comptroller-stringer-audit-reveals-thousands-of-computers-and-tablets-lost-and-unused-at-the-department-of-education/>).

survey, stated that the speed of their internet service did not meet their instructional needs<sup>13</sup>.

In addition, the Comptroller's Office found that DOE had no plans or total budgets in place during the decade-long project to upgrade schools' technology infrastructure. Missing information included project plans, implementation timelines, progress reports, costs, dates of installation, and all the names of contractors who worked on the project. The fact is, that in this day and age, it is irresponsible and verging on criminal that DOE, on two projects slated to spend over \$1 billion in tax dollars, would not collect the most basic information to ensure the integrity of the projects.

Time and again, Mayor de Blasio has waved off questions from the media when confronted by a topic he wants to ignore. The time for waving off questions is over. There is too much money at stake, and it is time for someone to take action. Nicole Malliotakis will have an audit conducted of all such contracts, eliminate waste where possible, and urge the Department of Investigation to pursue any leads of fraud, theft or corruption.

## **The School Construction Authority Must Be Audited to Identify Waste and Corruption.**

Improving and creating new school facilities is vitally important to providing New York City schoolchildren with an optimal learning environment, but the School Construction Authority (SCA) is over budget by at least \$300 million and has blown through cost estimates on more than half of its current projects. Examples of the mismanagement can be found at numerous schools including P.S. 303 in Queens, where a building extension that was originally budgeted for \$53.9 million has nearly doubled to \$98.6 million and P.S.11 in Queens, where an annex estimated to cost \$52 million increased to \$132.6 million. Even small projects like the conversion of a storefront in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn into a pre-K school with a capacity of 18 children cost a whopping \$6.5 million<sup>14</sup>. Instead of holding SCA accountable, Mayor de Blasio said, "we're giving them more and more money because they're using it so well<sup>15</sup>."

---

<sup>13</sup> *Without Plans, Budgets, or Timelines, DOE Spent Hundreds of Millions of Dollars for Internet Upgrades That Left Many Schools with Slow Service*, May 21, 2017 (<https://comptroller.nyc.gov/newsroom/without-plans-budgets-or-timelines-doe-spent-hundreds-of-millions-of-dollars-for-internet-upgrades-that-left-many-schools-with-slow-service/>).

<sup>14</sup> Selim Algar, *City spends \$6.5M to fix up this pre-K school – for 18 kids*, N.Y. POST, June 9, 2016 (<http://nypost.com/2016/06/09/city-spends-6-5m-to-fix-up-this-pre-k-school-for-18-kids/>).

<sup>15</sup> Yoav Gonen, *City's School Construction Authority is wildly over budget*, N.Y. POST, August 28, 2017 (<http://nypost.com/2017/08/28/citys-school-construction-authority-is-wildly-over-budget/amp/>).

This lack of responsibility is unfair to the taxpayer and compromises students who cannot get new schools due to funding issues. Nicole Malliotakis will have an audit conducted of all such projects, identify waste where possible, and urge the Department of Investigation to pursue any leads fraud, theft or corruption.

## **New Yorkers Deserve an Honest Look at Education Results.**

This past school year, 62% of New York City students in grades 3-8 did not pass state math exams, and 59% failed reading tests, yet Mayor de Blasio is taking a victory lap. Even more shocking is 80% of public school graduates who enter the CUNY system are required to take remedial math, writing, and reading during their freshman year<sup>16</sup>. This is not something to celebrate but instead should sound the alarm that reform is much needed.

As mayor Nicole Malliotakis will be honest about education results and will work transparently with educators, administrators, Community Education Councils, and other stakeholders to improve them. In addition to an audit of all contracts with consultants and vendors, she will work with her Chancellor to implement a metric system for programs and services to measure their success and failure so those that don't produce results they should be eliminated or replaced.

## **Career and Technical Training Programs (CTE) Should Be Expanded.**

Nicole Malliotakis believes that DOE must continue rediscovering the merits of vocational training, and how college is not always the answer for our young people to develop a successful career.

Under the Bloomberg Administration the city expanded these types of programs, known as Career and Technical Training (CTE) and, as Mayor, Nicole Malliotakis will grow these programs to maintain pace with evolving industries and re-emphasize gaining real world experience through internships. According to a 2015 survey conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers for the Partnership for New York City, less than 2% of our CTE

---

<sup>16</sup> Selim Algar, *Charter officials blast de Blasio for 'normalizing' bad test grades*, N.Y. POST, August 24, 2017 (<http://nypost.com/2017/08/24/charter-officials-blast-de-blasio-for-normalizing-bad-test-grades/>).

students completed internships in 2014<sup>17</sup>. It is certainly not easy for a high school student to secure an internship position on his or her own. DOE needs to commit more resources and play a more hands-on role in finding students these valuable experiences. Nicole's administration will partner with unions, corporations and non-profit organizations to provide for internships and apprenticeships.

## **CECs, PTAs, and SLTs Should Be Granted More Authority.**

Education is unique among municipal issues in that it demands a decentralized approach so that a collaborative relationship between parents and education professionals can thrive.

Community Education Councils (CECs), Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and School Leadership Teams (SLTs) should be provided with more substantial input on local district budget decisions. This will increase transparency and accountability by allowing the members the opportunity to view an all-inclusive school budget whenever necessary. The Malliotakis administration will have a close and transparent working relationship with all three to ensure that local concerns are truly considered in decision making.

## **De Blasio's "Renewal Schools" Program Is in Need of Its Own Renewal.**

This year's funding for Renewal Schools has reached \$185.6 million, and the total price tag since its inception less than three years ago is approaching \$800 million<sup>18</sup>. Sadly, this has not yielded the positive results Mayor Bill de Blasio promised when announcing the program to much fanfare in late 2014. What he has created is a case study on the time-honored warning that you cannot improve an education by simply throwing money at the problem. Unfortunately, throwing taxpayer money at problems hoping something sticks has often been Bill de Blasio's only solution.

---

<sup>17</sup> Shaun Dougherty and Tamar Jacoby, *Keeping New York City on the Cutting Edge of Technical Education*, CITY & STATE, April 14, 2016 (<http://cityandstateny.com/articles/opinion/keeping-new-york-city-on-the-cutting-edge-of-technical-education.html>).

<sup>18</sup> Susan Edelman, Bruce Golding, and Yoav Gonen, *City's 'Renewal Program' costs big bucks but shows few results*, N.Y. POST, March 5, 2017 (<http://nypost.com/2017/03/05/citys-renewal-program-costs-big-bucks-but-shows-few-results/>).

It has been reported that \$8.5 million is paid to 72 new Office of Renewal Schools staff and contracts for high price consultants paid up to \$1,400 per day cost taxpayers an additional \$40 million annually<sup>19</sup>. Combined with the 27 superintendents with renewal schools in their districts, and more than 700 staffers in Mayor de Blasio’s Borough Field Support Centers, many of these teachers and principals are faced with inconsistent, and sometimes conflicting direction<sup>20</sup>. How can we expect our children to succeed under a bloated system like this?

The most recent state standardized test results show that Renewal Schools are still underperforming – only 15.9% of their students passed the reading tests and 9.4% passed math, whereas students citywide passed at a rate of 40.6% and 37.8% respectively<sup>21</sup>.

Nicole Malliotakis will re-examine our city’s failing schools to determine which facilities need to close and be replaced with new, smaller schools, with more intensive instruction and a new administration. She will ensure that education funding is spent wisely by providing additional resources and assistance to our schools as directly as possible. Our teachers and principals are “the boots on the ground”, and they, not paid consultants or government bureaucrats, should be making the decisions that will positively impact New York City’s schoolchildren and give them the individualized attention they need to improve.

## **Specialized High Schools Should Remain Merit-Based.**

American Studies, Bronx Science, Brooklyn Tech, HSMSE, QHSS, Staten Island Tech, and Stuyvesant – seven of the city’s eight “specialized high schools” that evaluate applicants through the *Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT)* – all rank in the Top 100 High Schools nationwide according to *U.S. News & World Report*<sup>22</sup>. While other factors, such as personal statements, letters of recommendation, and

---

<sup>19</sup> Susan Edelman and Bruce Golding, *De Blasio’s questionable school consultants cost taxpayers millions*, N.Y. POST, March 7, 2017 (<http://nypost.com/2017/03/07/de-blasios-questionable-school-consultants-cost-taxpayers-millions/>).

<sup>20</sup> Meredith Kolodner, *The Convuluted Path to Improving New York City's Schools*, THE ATLANTIC, February 9, 2017 (<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2017/02/the-renewal-school-gamble/515985/>).

<sup>21</sup> Kate Taylor, *Struggling Schools Improve on Test Scores, but Not All Are Safe*, N.Y. TIMES, August 22, 2017 (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/22/nyregion/renewal-schools-test-scores-math-reading.html>).

<sup>22</sup> *Best High School Rankings*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT, (<https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/national-rankings>).

extracurricular activities can be reviewed to supplement an application, the primary criterion must be based on the student's academic performance.

Students should be encouraged to study for the SHSAT at a much younger age, and access to prep classes should be increased. Under no circumstances, however, should students' ethnicity or race provide an advantage or disadvantage in their quest to gain admittance to a specialized high school. As Mayor, Nicole Malliotakis would propose a partnership with the Khan Academy to enable all students, free of charge, to practice and prepare for the SHSAT, similar to Khan's successful partnership with The College Board<sup>23</sup>.

## **Grade-Fixing is Harmful to Students.**

There have been reports of students' grades being fixed in order to ensure graduation, thereby increasing the graduation rate. After a Brooklyn high school student was in danger of not graduating due to failing to show up to his English and Government classes, the principal permitted him to take online courses that lasted just a few days, with another student by his side to help him answer questions on the final exam. It was later disclosed that similar treatment was offered to 25% of the school's student body<sup>24</sup>.

In 2015, the principal of another Brooklyn high school was fired for allowing students to acquire credits through fraudulent means. She was later reinstated after it was determined that her actions were validated by DOE officials<sup>25</sup>.

We must ensure that students who complete their education in New York City's public school system are ready for college or the real world. Shockingly, 80% of the public school graduates in our city who enroll in a City University of New York (CUNY) community college are not college ready and are need to take remedial courses in reading, writing and math.

Fixing grades does nothing except cloud the evaluation of our school system, preventing the diagnosis of problems, and ultimately compromising the student by leaving him or her ill prepared for the future. Any principals or DOE officials who commit, authorize, or encourage grade fixing will face consequences.

---

<sup>23</sup> <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/practice/khan-academy>

<sup>24</sup> Susan Edelman, *This NYC high school has a big grade-fixing problem*, N.Y. POST, July 1, 2017 (<http://nypost.com/2017/07/01/this-journalism-school-has-a-big-grade-fixing-problem/>).

<sup>25</sup> Editorial, *Bet that the latest grade-fixing scandal is just the tip of the iceberg*, N.Y. POST, July 4, 2017 (<http://nypost.com/2017/07/04/bet-that-the-latest-grade-fixing-scandal-is-just-the-tip-of-the-iceberg/>).

# Technology & Financial Literacy Education

Ensuring our students have access to top level technology resources and equipment so that they can acquire the tools and critical knowledge to thrive in a modern economy. New York City needs to rethink how we introduce science, technology and math courses to students from an early age so that they are comfortable with STEM subjects and ready for advanced courses in these areas when they get to High School not having to wait until College. We have to be aggressive so that we can roll out these initiatives much sooner than the Mayor has proposed and reach as many young students as possible. States across this country are recently recognizing the importance of classes in Financial Literacy and as Mayor I will make it a priority that all New York City High School students graduate after having taken a course in Financial Literacy which empowers them with important information about budgeting and understanding basic finance which will help them make responsible decisions as they enter college and the workforce.