

We write to urge that full funding for New York City Schools Support Service (NYCSSS) be included in the upcoming FY 2021 budget.

NYCSSS employs 6,400 cleaners and handypersons represented by SEIU 32BJ. These hardworking men and women work under a contract with the Department of Education to provide school facility cleaning and maintenance services. Since the outset of the COVID-19 crisis, they have been on the front lines sanitizing our schools—putting themselves at risk in order to keep students and staff healthy.

As we determine our budget for next year, spending to ensure that NYC’s public school buildings are clean and safe should be a top priority. Despite the current switch to remote learning, many school buildings are still being utilized to provide care and meals for children of essential workers. Other school sites also need deep cleaning and maintenance that can only be done when they are not in regular use. And, when our schools re-open more broadly for in-person instruction, enhanced cleaning will be required to create a safe environment. To meet these needs, NYCSSS must be operating at full capacity, not facing cuts in hours and positions.

Funding for NYCSSS represents a small portion of DOE’s annual spending. However, it has an outsized impact on the welfare of our school community. This includes not only kids and teachers, but also NYCSSS workers themselves. A typical school cleaner supporting a household of three earns less than 60% of AMI in wages, and many live in the low-income communities most impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. These essential workers are continuing to bravely maintain our school infrastructure, and they need and deserve our support.

We cannot afford to reduce maintenance or cleaning in New York City schools in the midst of a public health crisis. An investment in NYCSSS is an investment in the trained cleaning and maintenance workforce we need to bend the curve, and in the safety of more than a million public school students and staff.

**Council Member Alicka Ampry-samuel**  
**Council Member Diana Ayala**  
**Council Member Justin Brannan**  
**Council Member Fernando Cabrera**  
**Council Member Mathieu Eugene**  
**Council Member Vanessa Gibson**  
**Council Member Mark Gjonaj**  
**Council Member Barry Grodenchik**  
**Council Member Ben Kallos**  
**Council Member Andy King**

**Council Member Mark Levine**  
**Council Member Farah Louis**  
**Council Member Carlos Menchaca**  
**Council Member Francisco Moya**  
**Council Member Keith Powers**  
**Council Member Antonio Reynoso**  
**Council Member Donovan Richards**  
**Council Member Carlina Rivera**  
**Council Member Rafael Salamanca**  
**Council Member Mark Treyger**  
**Council Member Paul Vallone**