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Mark Levine, Borough President

Hon. Eric Adams
Mayor, New York City
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Greg Faulkner
Chair, Panel for Educational Policy
New York City Department of Education
65 Court Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Marielle Ali
Panel for Educational Policy, Member
One Centre Street, 19th floor
New York, NY 10007

Mayor Adams, Chair Faulkner, Member Ali:

The U.S. Department of Education's recent threats to cancel grants promised to our public schools are nothing short of a brazen attack on the human rights and dignity we promise to New York City students, especially our vulnerable LGBTQ+ young people. These efforts are illegal, failing to comply with both New York City and State law, as well as the very Title IX protections that the federal government is misinterpreting. New York City must stand firm and reject these hateful, discriminatory actions.

I am proud that the Department of Education has begun to forcefully push back on the federal government's attempt to withhold Magnet School Assistance Program funding, rightly arguing that due process has been ignored; that the federal interpretation of Title IX has no connection to MSAP funding; and that withdrawing support would directly undermine the program's goal of expanding access and opportunity for underserved communities. It must also be said plainly that the Trump Administration's claim that New York City's guidelines protecting trans youth violate Title IX is absurd, as safeguarding vulnerable students is precisely the purpose of Title IX.

We must also emphasize that trans and gender-expansive youth are explicitly protected under New York City and New York State law, including, but not limited to, the Human Rights Law, which prohibits discrimination in education and public accommodations. It is my clear expectation that the City and the Department of Education will continue to uphold these laws for all children, and that includes standing firm in protecting the rights and dignity of trans youth.

Regrettably, as proud as I am of the Department of Education's and the Panel for Educational Policy's actions to date, I am deeply concerned about recent comments from the Mayor regarding trans rights and access to gender-affirming care and education. Such remarks are

harmful to our public school students and risk sending the wrong message to vulnerable young people who need to know that their city and school communities stand fully behind them.

As this fight continues, I call on the DOE and the Panel for Educational Policy to remain steadfast in their defense of trans and gender-expansive students. Their right to participate fully and safely in school life is non-negotiable, and New York City must send a clear message that we will not sacrifice equality and inclusion in exchange for federal dollars. Additionally, the Mayor must cease using rhetoric that undermines our city's values of inclusion and must identify prospective emergency funds for any school that has grant dollars illegally revoked.

I urge you to continue to use every legal and public forum to defend these protections and to ensure that federal funding for our schools is preserved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Levine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Levine" clearly distinguishable.

Mark Levine
Manhattan Borough President