



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER  
BRAD LANDER



**JUMAANE D.  
WILLIAMS**

July 21, 2025

Mayor Eric Adams  
Office of the Mayor  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Long term extensions for NYC school bus contracts**

Dear Mayor Adams:

It has come to our attention that in the waning days of this term, your administration plans to enter into five-year extensions for the New York City Department of Education (DOE)'s 46-year-old school bus contracts, the terms of which are not only severely outdated, but seriously harmful to students and their families. We are writing to demand that you limit any contract extensions to 1-3 years, rather than lock the city into flawed contracts.

Limiting these contract extensions to 1-3 years would give the State Legislature time to enact employee protection legislation next session and allow DOE to competitively rebid the contracts with improvements, including afterschool and summer rising transportation, universal air conditioning, better driver and attendant provisions, and greater accountability for poor service. The bus companies may be content collecting taxpayer dollars while delivering unacceptable service, but our students and families deserve far better—and they should not have to wait until 2030 for relief from a system that's failing them now.

Currently DOE provides contracted school bus transportation to 145,000 NYC students—more than the public school enrollment of Philadelphia. Unfortunately, this contracted system of bus service is failing to meet the needs of many New York City families and students, including 62,000 students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and the 14,000 students who are experiencing homelessness and have the right to bus service under the federal McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987.

The outdated terms of DOE's 46-year-old school bus contracts make it nearly impossible to hold the 52 bus companies accountable for poor service. This results in extreme delays which make students late to school and forces parents to miss work, creates overly long routes that often break IEP mandated travel time limits, and cause other service issues. In the 2023-24 school year, 82,000 delays and breakdowns were recorded, with some students enduring commutes of up to two hours each way.<sup>1</sup> Just this past school year, extreme delays of more than an hour increased by 26%.<sup>2</sup> DOE's current contracts do not include service for afterschool programs or Summer Rising, preventing students who rely on bus transportation from participating in these activities and denying the City a truly "universal" afterschool program. Even today there are children with 12 month IEPs who do not have busing for their summer programs and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://infohub.nyced.org/reports/government-reports/office-of-pupil-transportation-bi-annual-reports>

<sup>2</sup> [https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Transportation/Bus-Breakdown-and-Delays/ez4e-fazm/about\\_data](https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Transportation/Bus-Breakdown-and-Delays/ez4e-fazm/about_data)

others sitting on brutally hot buses in 90+ degree weather. Finally, there is an estimated driver shortage of 300 drivers contributing to both service issues and overly long routes, which could be rectified with better contracts.

DOE's ability to rebid its bus contracts is hampered by a 2011 New York State Court of Appeals decision (*L&M Bus Corp. v. New York City Dept. of Educ.*). This ruling blocks the City from issuing new contracts unless it removes the Employee Protection Provisions (EPPs), which ensure drivers keep their jobs and maintain their wages and benefits when a company loses its contract or goes out of business.

Legislation could directly address this issue—preserving EPPs in new contracts and enabling DOE to competitively procure school bus contracts by FY2027. Prior proposed bills outlined a path toward delivering high-quality bus service for tens of thousands of New York City students. It is unacceptable to lock the City into another five-year extension of outdated, harmful contracts—condemning families to continue suffering from a system that has already caused far too much disruption and trauma. The City must limit any contract extension to no more than 1–3 years and do everything in its power to urge the State to pass this legislation in the upcoming session.

The harm caused by poor school bus service is real, widespread, and ongoing—and agreeing to five-year extensions would amount to washing our hands of any responsibility to fix it until 2030. That is simply not acceptable.

Sincerely,



NYC Comptroller Brad Lander



Public Advocate Jumaane Williams

cc: Chancellor Melissa Aviles-Ramos