



NYC YOUTH CALL FOR RESPECT, EQUITY AND VOICE IN THEIR EDUCATION

*Youth researchers in the "Education is a Human Right" campaign produce report
critical of current system under Mayoral control*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK, New York-June 6, 2008— Lead by an impassioned charge; "The current New York City school system isn't working," a diverse group of current and former public high school students took to the streets (and computers) of this city with a common goal: to be instruments of change in the NYC public school system. Named the Youth Researchers for a New Educational System (YRNES) the group designed a participatory action research project that has resulted in a scathing, yet decidedly hopeful analysis of the public school system, published as "The YRNES Report."

The researchers, aged 17-21, conducted a city-wide survey of more than 500 youth, and their findings call attention to issues of mayoral control, school decision making and community participation, maldistributed resources and educational opportunities, and the need to recalibrate the purposes of schooling.

Unlike most education-reform white papers, The YRNES Report provides youth perspectives on the barriers to learning, including a compelling graphic "Problem Tree" that maps the everyday symptoms and structural roots of a flawed school system. Youth perspectives on racist school practices, closed access to needed opportunities, school crowding, testing, school safety, and humiliating conditions are presented.

The YRNES researchers found that youth of color, low-income youth, and youth from large and/or recently converted schools experience more inequities in school. Many youth reported that they do not get the resources they need to learn, and that they do not get the help they need to make their education work for them. Youth report that they feel that they need to compete for things in school to which they actually possess rights. Youth critique the current model of mayoral control, and argue for opportunities for meaningful participation in school decision making.

The report features a clear portrayal of the research findings, with dynamic images and easy-to-read charts. The report will serve the work of youth and adult education activists, concerned citizens, school leaders and educators, and anyone working toward more fair and more meaningful schooling. The report concludes with a platform of recommendations for change.

The YRNES Project was completed in collaboration with the Collective of Researchers on Educational Disappointment and Desire (CREDD), Fordham University's National Center for Schools and Communities, and the Independent Commission on Public Education (iCOPE).

Organizations co-sponsoring the report include Advocates for Children; the Participatory Action Research Collective at the Graduate Center, CUNY.

For copies of The YRNES Report, to schedule a press interview, or to request a group presentation, or more information on the "Education is a Human Right Campaign," please contact Ellen Raider at the Independent Commission on Public Education (iCOPE) (718) 499-3756 or Ellen.Raider@gmail.com