

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Teach Our Children Invites Mayor DeStefano to an Open Forum

New Haven Parents, Students and Community Members will be in attendance

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New Haven, CT - Teach Our Children and Youth Unleashed are inviting Mayor John DeStefano to an open forum to be hosted at the Center Church on the Green's Parish Hall (311 Temple St.) on the topic of the New Haven Public Schools budget. The meeting will take place on April 30th, 2011 at 12:00 p.m.

New Haven Public Schools spends approximately thirty dollars per student on textbooks. This amount is not even enough to provide each student with half a textbook each year. Too many NHPS classrooms don't have enough books to go around and many are left using outdated materials. "My Algebra II book is physically damaged; there are pages missing, equations scratched out and, noticeable water damage," explained Terrell Roman, Hillhouse High Senior, "I am sad to say my book is in better condition than any textbook that has been assigned to me during my four years."

Our school district only has 29 nurses to cover 53 schools. Many TOC parents are concerned about the lack of a full time nurse at many schools. Joseph Video, a Clemente Leadership Academy parent states, "to not have a nurse there puts our kids in danger. Students have a variety of medical needs, like asthma or peanut allergies. The nurse is the first line of defense." Roberto Clemente Leadership Academy has a nurse that is shared with at least one other school.

As critical stakeholders in our school district, New Haven Parents, students, and community members want to see real changes to the way district funding is prioritized with increased investment in classroom resources and essential teaching and nursing staff. Our public meeting is an opportunity for parents, students, and the wider community to engage in a frank conversation about our school districts budget priorities.

In January of 2011, Mayor DeStefano said, "seeing that all our kids are academically ready . . . to graduate from college" is one of the three major goals of the school reform initiative and that, "whatever else we do as a city, there is nothing more important than accomplishing these three things in the lives of our children." If we are going to prepare NHPS students to graduate from college, we must properly invest in our schools. The future of our community is at stake.

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Teach Our Children (TOC) is a grassroots organization of New Haven parents with several hundred members to improve public schools. Teach Our Children's mission is to ensure that we as parents are truly involved with education policy and decision-making and rightfully acknowledged as critical participants in the success of New Haven's school system. TOC was founded in January 2006.