

**INDEPENDENT COMMISSION  
On PUBLIC EDUCATION**



**P.O. Box 582, Brooklyn, NY, 11215 Phone/Fax 718 499-3756**



**Unity Press conference  
Education is a Human Right Campaign  
Wednesday, September 28, 2005  
4:30-5:30 pm  
Steps of City Hall**

**Join individuals and groups calling for the formation of an  
*Independent task force*  
of parents, community members, students, teachers, principals, policy-  
makers, elected officials, scholars and business leaders that is free of  
political partisanship and control  
*to shape a new common vision for our NYC schools based on  
human rights***

**Endorsers** (*List in Formation*) National Center for Schools & Communities, the National Economic & Social Rights Initiative, the Human Rights Project of the Urban Justice Center, Black New Yorkers for Educational Excellence, Parents in Action, Class Size Matters, Amnesty International, Center for Immigrant Families, Make the Road by Walking, Gloves Off, Association of NYC Education Councils, Time Out from Testing, AntiRacist Alliance, Acecainc The Brooklyn Childcare Collective, People's Institute NY, Parents of PS 268

**EDUCATION ACTION SUMMIT PLATFORM DRAFT**  
*Building A Human Rights Vision For New York City Public Schools*

**Seeking a Common Vision through a Human Rights Framework**

On April 16, 2005, parents, students, teachers and advocates met at the Education Action Summit to call for a new system of public education in New York City based on human rights. Whole system change is needed to create schools that meet the needs of every child and place greater power in the hands of parents, students, teachers and school communities.

Human rights represent a legal framework, political vision, and global strategy for ensuring the equality and dignity of every human being, as well as a culture shift in attitudes and practices. Bringing a human rights culture to New York City schools would mean the creation of safe and nurturing environments for children that help fully develop their capabilities. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights documents guarantee the rights to quality education, dignity and safety for every child, an equitable distribution of resources, freedom from discrimination, and meaningful participation for parents, students and communities.

The current New York City school system fails to guarantee these human rights standards.<sup>1</sup> Children are denied the skills and knowledge they need as a result of inadequate resources in the classroom, overcrowded and crumbling schools, the pressure and narrow focus of testing, inadequate counseling, and the criminalization of schools. Disparities in resources and outcomes based on race and class violate the human rights principle of non-discrimination. These disparities stem from the historical and present reality of American society which sorts people into two groups – those who receive a good education and those who do not – limiting one group of people to work in low-paid jobs. Our system’s top-down bureaucracy prevents flexibility in reform efforts, and keeps the power to change the system away from parents, students, educators and communities. These problems run too deep for any one change in policy or shift in governance to solve. A whole system change in education is needed.

For more information contact  
iCOPE  
718 499 3756

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<sup>1</sup> See “Education Action Summit Planks” submitted by advocates from throughout New York City. Available from iCOPE.