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The Road to Better Busing Coalition Releases a Statement on Ongoing Harmful and Exclusionary Summer Busing Operations for New York City Students

8.5.25, 9:00 AM– With roughly two weeks remaining in New York City’s summer programming, the Road to Better Busing Coalition—a coalition of education, disability, and transit justice organizations, advocates, and parents—calls on City and State officials to treat the current ineffective busing conditions as a clear sign of the urgent need for systemic reform, including creating a timely pathway for adoption of fair new bus contracts.

Last week’s heatwave once again exposed the dangerous reality facing too many of NYC’s children, especially students with disabilities, who continue to rely on a fundamentally broken transportation system. Previous [reports](#) of buses used to transport students for summer programming have quoted [temperatures over 100 degrees](#) due to a lack of air conditioning. Parents in years [past have shared](#) disturbing accounts of children arriving home visibly drained, only to discover their bus ride was spent in sweltering heat. Parents have noted this year is no different. Parent advocate and Panel for Education Policy member Rima Izquierdo has noted this summer that her children do not wish to take the bus home because of the unbearable heat and lack of cooling.

Currently, more than 10% of buses in the summer and 30% during the school year lack air conditioning. While city law mandates that all buses transporting students with disabilities be equipped with air conditioning, this law doesn’t take effect until 2035—a full decade from now. Moreover, all children, not just those with disabilities, are vulnerable to harm when confined to overheated vehicles for extended periods.

Additionally, current limitations in bus service create inequities in access to Summer Rising programs. Bus service is only available at 3:00 PM, forcing students who rely on yellow bus transportation to leave hours before their peers, undermining any promise for inclusive, full-day programming.

We have also heard from parents the same challenges this summer that we hear every year: bus service that was not in place for the start of the summer, that showed up inconsistently, or that got their child to school late. With a six-week summer program, these issues caused some children to miss a significant portion of their summer program.

The inequities in summer busing are often just a preview of the persistent and predictable issues that resurface each Fall. This year must mark the end of continued noncompliance and inaction. The City and the State have a role to play. The State must pass legislation to allow the City to rebid bus contracts without requiring it to strip current bus worker protections, known as Employee Protection Provisions (EPP), from new contracts; this change is essential to unlocking the structural reforms needed to support improvements to yellow bus service.

Like many long-standing transportation issues, summer busing challenges are exacerbated by NYC's ongoing reliance on outdated, 45-year-old bus contracts. A rebidding process for new bus contracts with EPPs would enable the City to make air conditioning an immediate and mandatory requirement, provide a path for busing home from full-day summer programming, and implement other necessary improvements.

With school bus contract extensions under consideration this fall, the Road to Better Busing Coalition strongly reaffirms its position: New York City must reject any long-term extension of these outdated contracts. The City should move forward with the shortest extension possible to allow time for needed legislation to pass this year so that it can rebid the bus contracts and finally create meaningful change.

Children deserve safe, equitable, and dignified transportation, this summer and every season.