

January 30, 2012



**STATEMENT FROM THE ARISE COALITION REGARDING THE COMPTROLLER'S
RECENT AUDIT ON THE DELIVERY OF RELATED SERVICES IN NYC**

Last week, the Comptroller for the City of New York released an "Audit Report on the Procurement of Direct Student Services by the Department of Education." The report concludes that the New York City Department of Education (DOE), by its own accounting, has failed to provide related services to more than tens of thousands of students with disabilities in New York City.

The DOE is in the midst of a major reform initiative focused on special education, the stated goal of which is to improve access to challenging academic curriculum and to achieve better outcomes for students with disabilities. The ARISE Coalition -- a group of parents, educators, and advocates who push for systemic changes to benefit all students, including students with disabilities here in NYC -- supports the DOE's reform goals to the extent that they aim to better day-to-day experiences for youth with disabilities and their families and to improve long-term outcomes for students with special education needs.

However, students with disabilities have a legal right to receive related services required by their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). The Comptroller's report -- whether or not its numbers are inflated, as the DOE has claimed -- shows that a shocking number of students with IEPs are not, in fact, receiving those services. Failure to implement students' IEPs is certainly not the only issue facing students with disabilities in NYC, but it remains a critical problem.

Many of the members of the ARISE Coalition work directly with students and their families. Regardless of disagreements between the Comptroller and the DOE about the specific numbers of students unserved and underserved, we continue to see inexcusable gaps in special education service delivery on a regular basis.

We call on the DOE to live up to its obligation to provide all supports and services necessary and appropriate to enable students with disabilities to make educational progress. Further, we specifically request that the DOE respond publicly to the Comptroller's report with an action plan to address gaps in service delivery.