

## How To Use This MTA MetroCard Letter Writing Kit

On the following pages, we've provided you with:

- 1) Some Facts about the Student MetroCard Crisis
- 2) A letter template that has been filled out with suggestions
- 3) A blank letter template

We have provided the Fact Sheet on the following page for your information. You might want to choose a few of these facts and ideas to guide the discussion with your students. You might be surprised at how few of them may even know about the impending crisis.

The template is meant to reflect your in-class writing workshop. There is only a small space for students to really personalize the message. Taking the time to have the students draw pictures of their commutes will be helpful in making the point.

Please consider submitting these letters as testimony. The Straphangers Campaign is collecting this via their website. If you have typed your letters, you can upload the text as part of their testimony tool kit. Please go to their general website [www.straphangers.org](http://www.straphangers.org) and follow the links to the appropriate page. Since your classes have written their letters by hand, please consider sending an extra copy to them to bring with them to the local hearings. These can be sent to:

NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign  
9 Murray Street, 3rd floor  
New York, NY 10007

You might want to also think about organizing parents, school staff and students to go to a hearing in the city. Please look for the hearing days and times at <http://www.mta.info/news/pdf/hearings.pdf>

The MetroCard crisis is a very real problem affecting families across the five boroughs, but it can also be an important opportunity to teach your students how to make a difference! We encourage you to mail their letters and submit them to Straphangers Campaign as public testimony to help get student passes back. For more information, please see [www.straphangers.org/studentpasses](http://www.straphangers.org/studentpasses).

There are SO many reasons why students need to be able to take transit to school:

- New York is considered one of the greenest cities in the country because so many people use walking, cycling, the subway, and buses to get around.
- Getting to work, only 23% of New Yorkers drive; the rest take public transit, walk, or bike.
- Even carrying all those commuters, New York's mass transit system results in only 3% of its total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions!
- We also get exercise when we take transit – we walk to and from the bus and subway, and that's good for our health.
- The Department of Transportation estimates that 80% percent of students walk and take public transportation to school – and Middle and High School students know how important transit it to their daily commutes.
- New York City students deserve to be part of our sustainable, healthy transit choices – so many of you take transit to get around. Right now, over 400,000 NYC students receive free MetroCards, and more than 160,000 get half-fare cards.

As your students write their letters, try to encourage them to be constructive and in favor of things rather than against them. Some facts they might want to consider include some we've learned from the Straphangers Campaign:

- Costs could range from about \$343 for each half-fare child to as much as \$890 a year for fare-free students.
- Forcing families to pay for student MetroCards will greatly reduce the access of students to extracurricular activities, sports, culture, and the life of the city.
- Student travel has been subsidized on the city's buses and subways since the 1940s. Up until 1995, the State and the City paid for the entire costs of passes.
- The MTA says it cost \$214 million a year to provide student MetroCards. The agency is now only receiving \$70 million in State and City support.

[Name of elected official]

[Address of elected official]

[Address of elected official]

[Date]

Dear [Name of elected official]:

I am a student at [your school] in [your borough] .

I am very worried about the proposed cuts to the Student MetroCards.

I take the [your bus or subway line] and without the reduced fare,

it will be hard for my family to get me to school every day.

Fill in these lines with something personal or something you are requesting

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Sincerely,

-----[your name]-----

Have the students make a drawing of  
them taking the subway or the bus

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Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am a student at \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_.

I am very worried about the proposed cuts to the Student MetroCards.

I take the \_\_\_\_\_ and without the reduced fare,

it will be hard for my family to get me to school every day.

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Sincerely,

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