

DAILY NEWS EDITORIAL

Garbage in, garbage out

The city's commercial waste industry needs a cleanup, as spotlighted by the recent shutdown of rolling menace Sanitation Salvage following two fatalities and a foul labor record.

Mayor de Blasio gets ahead of himself by planning to wave a wand and usher in a radically new marketplace administered by the Department of Sanitation.

The idea, up for its first public hearing on Tuesday, would end the current free-for-all, where dozens of companies serve thousands of businesses. In its place, 300 square miles of New York would get carved into 20 zones, with government awarding bids to three to five carters for each — with a preference for those that promote worker safety, waste reduction, low emissions and decent pricing.

Oh yes, pricing. All these upgrades could cost, how much, no one can quite

say. Los Angeles experienced sticker shock with the launch of a similar system.

Given the overly polluting sprawl of today's pickups and a race to the bottom among some haulers, imposing order has real appeal. But there are less invasive ways to attack corruption and safety problems, such as strengthening the power of city's limp Business Integrity Commission.

Before upending thousands of long-standing business arrangements, the vast majority of which are working, the zone concept ought to be tested — via a pilot program in one or more parts of the city. Simultaneously, Sanitation can prove it can manage a rough-and-tumble industry more effectively than, say, the Department of Education handles school busing.

Run a pilot. Study results. Refine plans. Then and only then, bring on the zones.

Mind the gap, Andy

Transit Authority boss Andy Byford did himself no favors by blaming a spike in fare evasion, and the estimated \$200 million in forfeited revenue that goes with it, on Manhattan DA Cy Vance's decision to decline prosecution of most subway turnstile jumpers.

But let's not fool ourselves: turnstile-jumping — or sauntering in through an open emergency exit gate, or the back door of a bus — is a serious problem, and indications are it's getting worse. That demands action.

Vance claims to be doing his part, albeit with something closer to a criminal-justice scalpel rather than a chainsaw. In February, he announced his office would stop prosecuting most fare-evasion arrests, handing out tickets instead, except when aggravating factors required suspects to get cuffed and hauled in.

By late summer, an initially wary NYPD stopped arresting most turnstile-jumpers, and started taking people with outstanding warrants directly to court.

The new policy, says the brass, is saving cops' time and actually increasing police presence underground. Since November 2017, arrests are way down, but summonses are way up. Overall evasion citations have grown by 25%.

Especially with half-priced fares for low-income straphangers soon to come online, the city must, one way or another, keep its eye on the ball. Not just on trains, but on buses, where cheating is rampant and there's no easy answer.

Byford is mulling enhanced "eagle teams" of uniformed MTA employees to deter and catch evaders.

Fine. If you don't pay the fare, you must pay a price.

Messages in a bottle

Mayor de Blasio finds himself in a painful pinch as a corruption trial belches evidence of his unseemly ties.

Specifically, emails between the mayor and star witness and megadonor Jona Reznitz, who is cooperating with federal prosecutors against his former partner in palm greasing, Jeremy Reichberg, and ex-NYPD bigwig James Grant, after pleading guilty to bribing the mayor and buying favors from the police.

Exhibit A: Messages harvested from Reznitz's email account oozing with passion between mayor and donor, including this 2014

Inauguration Day missive from the mayor: "Please call me tomorrow to setup a meeting for early next week. I need you to accept the position I offered you. Love you brother."

Or, we should say, maybe the mayor: As Reichberg's lawyer reminded the judge, Reznitz is notorious for doctoring emails to puff up his profile as a mover and shaker.

If only de Blasio took pains to preserve his emails, instead of asserting a broad right to instantly delete that's wildly at odds with the public's right to know, he might have a shot at proving Reznitz missives phony as a three-dollar bill. Letting a crook tell your story rarely ends well.

Better school reform

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BY EFREM SIGEL

Now that New York City's Department of Education seems likely to pull the plug on its largely unsuccessful School Renewal program at the end of the current school year, the question becomes how to avoid such fiascos in the future.

The program was announced with great fanfare by Mayor de Blasio in November 2014 — and although the city has poured \$773 million (even in New York, a lot of money) into about 100 struggling schools, a never-released evaluation from the RAND Corp. found little in the way of academic gains for children in those schools.

Still, advocates for more money for urban schools appear to be drawing the wrong lesson from the failures of the program. One option that DOE is considering is to kill Renewal but continue to endow those very schools with the same pots of extra money for mental health counseling, dental clinics and other special services.

It's hard to be against providing resources for kids who need help. But in fact, avoiding pouring more money into failing schools is exactly the right lesson of the Renewal program. Instead, let's put resources to better use by investing in the leaders of successful schools and enabling them to double or triple their efforts. By successful schools, I mean not the ones in affluent Greenwich Village or Park Slope, but the handful of high-performing schools in the very neighborhoods where Renewal Schools are located.

My own research for a book on young people growing up in East Harlem identifies half a dozen successful schools in District 4 (East Harlem) out of nearly 40 DOE and charter schools operating there. In contrast to the underperforming schools, at the successful ones a majority of students are achieving proficiency in English Language Arts and math.

And the successful schools all serve students who come from predominantly poor fam-

ilies, many of which are headed by single moms, many living in public housing or shelters. At all of them, Hispanic and black students are 90% or more of enrollment.

One of the DOE schools, PS/IS 171 Patrick Henry, was just honored as one of the best urban schools in the country by the National Center for Urban School Transformation at San Diego State University. One of the charters, Dream Charter School, recently got authorization to expand into the Bronx with two new schools. By so doing, Dream aims to replicate its expertise and record of achievement in neighborhoods that sorely need such models of success.

Those are just two examples. There are more willing and able to blossom, if only the city would invest in their growth.

The leaders of these schools have assembled staffs of dedicated teachers working together as a team, with the kind of esprit and commitment to see every child thrive that are essential for success. Some are al-

ready expanding enrollment in their existing buildings. Others could see their schools become the hubs of small networks of neighborhood schools.

There are many ways to expand — but all represent learning from what works, doubling down on good results.

This would be thinking locally and starting small, for example, with three schools each in some of the city's lowest-performing districts, such as East Harlem, the South Bronx and Brownsville.

Every successful organization, whether it's a for-profit company or a nonprofit serving people in need, knows that the best investment is expansion of a program or product that is working, not failing. For too long in public education we've poured money into failure. It's time, finally, to bet on success.

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City needs to invest more in successful schools