



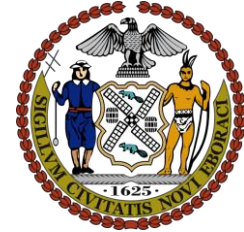
UNITED STATES HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES



THE NEW YORK
STATE SENATE



THE NEW YORK
STATE ASSEMBLY



THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF NEW YORK

April 17, 2017

Chancellor Carmen Fariña
Department of Education
Tweed Courthouse, 52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chancellor Fariña,

We are writing to strongly urge the Department of Education to take all feasible steps to provide pre-kindergarten seats in the community for all the four-year-olds living on the Upper East Side (59th to 96th Street) who applied for the 2017–2018 school year. We are deeply concerned that if the number of pre-kindergarten classes is not significantly increased, hundreds of families will be left without realistic options.

We are grateful for the work you and your staff have done with us to open hundreds of additional pre-kindergarten seats at both public schools and private pre-schools since 2014. However, it is evident that many more seats are required. Based upon your March 8, 2017 testimony before the City Council, as well as from follow-up conversations with your staff, we understand that more than 900 four-year-olds applied for the 596 seats currently slated to be available for the 2017–2018 school year. This represents a loss of 22 seats from the previous school year and means that at least one in three four-year-olds will not be offered a seat in their neighborhood.

The unmet need for pre-kindergarten seats in the area is likely far greater since the application data cannot capture the families who chose not to apply after learning about the limited number available seats. In 2014, WNYC reported that Yorkville, Lenox Hill, and Roosevelt Island alone had 2,118 four year olds. Given the substantial development of family-sized units that has taken place in the community since then, the number of four year olds living on the Upper East Side today is presumably even greater.

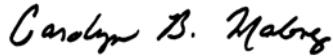
We appreciate your recent commitment to Council Members Kallos and Garodnick to have the School Construction Authority find, lease, and build out pre-kindergarten centers on the Upper East Side, and want to assist in this effort any way we can. In the short-term, the Department of Education must do everything possible to provide seats for all the 900 four-year-olds who applied for the next school year by opening new classrooms in all public school buildings with space and working with community-based providers. Over the longer term, we urge the Department of Education, School Construction Authority, and Department of City Planning to comprehensively study the need for pre-kindergarten seats by neighborhood and then develop plans for how these seats will be created.

Thank you for your continued commitment to quality education for the City of New York. We are eager to work with you to help achieve the Mayor's historic goal of providing pre-kindergarten for all four-year-olds.

Sincerely,



Ben Kallos
Council Member



Carolyn Maloney
Congress Member



Gale Brewer
Borough President



Liz Krueger
State Senator



Rebecca Seawright
Assembly Member



Dan Quart
Assembly Member



Dan Garodnick
Council Member

Cc: Mayor Bill de Blasio

Lorraine Grillo, President and CEO, School Construction Authority

Marisa Lago, Director, Department of City Planning