



THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF NEW YORK

July 23, 2020

Mayor Bill de Blasio
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Chancellor Richard Carranza
Department of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Lorraine Grillo, President & CEO
NYC School Construction Authority
3030 Thomson Ave
Long Island City, NY 11101

Dear Mayor de Blasio, Chancellor Carranza, and President Grillo,

Following your announcement that New York City would plan to reopen its schools in the fall with a mix of in-person teaching and remote learning, we both raised concerns about the need for childcare as parents go back to work. On July 10, Council Member Kallos wrote [a letter](#) to you urging you to address what United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew has called the impending “[Childcare Crisis](#)” by exploring opening “remote learning centers” for children who cannot stay at home, and suggested that you look at existing public spaces such as libraries or youth, senior and community centers where available, as well as vacant storefronts to establish these centers. On July 11, Council Member Lander published [a plan](#) calling for wraparound enrichment services for children, employer accommodations for parents, and support for existing child care providers.

We were pleased to see your [announcement](#) on July 16 that the City will “provide quality, safe, free childcare options for 100,000 children this fall” by utilizing “schools, community centers, libraries, cultural organizations, and more.” We are concerned, however, that 100,000 childcare seats will not cover the children in need of a place to learn remotely. According to your plan one-half to two-thirds of those students will be out of school on any given day. [New state social distancing guidelines for schools](#) will greatly restrict the number of students able to be at school at any time, as we prioritize preventing the spread of Covid-19 and keeping our teachers and students safe.

Thank you for providing a [portal for submitting property sites](#) to be considered for this program. We ask you to continue to include elected officials and parents in your search for space to accommodate 100,000 socially distanced students and report on your progress regularly. We are eager to be of assistance and to learn about your progress in securing now-closed private and parochial schools, including [26 closed by the Archdiocese](#), existing public spaces such as libraries and community centers, as well as existing businesses and empty storefronts. First and foremost, we must find sites that can accommodate the social distancing guidelines, and ensure that whether in schools or remote learning centers, our teachers and students are safe.

More than 800,000 children from 3K through 8th grade attend New York City's public schools. If in-person learning is divided into two or three shifts, then approximately 400,000 – 533,000 of these students will be learning remotely at any given time. We are concerned that the planned 100,000 childcare seats will be inadequate.

As the New York State economy continues to move forward with re-opening Phase 4, it is our responsibility in government to provide parents and children with the safest possible plan for re-opening schools with sufficient capacity. We join countless parents in demanding more information, including how placements will be determined if there is more demand than seats and in particular that the city plan for and guarantee a seat for every family and student who needs one even if that number is closer to 533,000. Parents continue to reach out to me to share their anxiety regarding the upcoming school year, and any additional information we can provide will help New York City's families plan for this uncertain time.

Sincerely,



Ben Kallos
Council Member
5th District



Brad Lander
Council Member
39th District