



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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Burt Lazarin
Chair

Jesse R. Bodine
District Manager

February 14, 2019

The Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor of the City of New York
City Hall
New York, New York, 10007

Re: School Accessibility

Dear Mayor de Blasio,

At the February 6, 2019 Full Board Meeting of Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) the board voted 33 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining and 0 present but not eligible to vote, voted to support the efforts of the Action for Reform in Special Education (ARISE) Coalition and Parents for Inclusive Education (PIE) to improve access to our public schools. In addition, MCB4 also supports their request to ensure that the City include major funding in the amount of \$750 million in the FY 2020-2024 School Construction Authority (SCA) Five-Year Capital Plan in order to reach the goal of making at least one-third of our public schools in each district accessible to students, parents, and teachers with physical disabilities by 2024.

At the December 10, 2018 meeting of the Arts, Culture, Education & Street Life Committee (ACES), a representative from ARISE informed the members of the \$150 million added to the city budget over the next three years for school accessibility. We commend this important step to make our schools more inclusive and create more opportunities for students with physical disabilities.

Nearly three decades have elapsed since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act and over four decades since the enactment of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

A 2018 city-wide accessibility survey was conducted by Department of Education (DOE) on all school buildings. Within MCD4, 13 buildings were surveyed encompassing 34 schools. The survey reported 7 buildings as Fully Accessible and 6 buildings as Partially Accessible. Within those buildings, 16 schools are FA and 18 schools are PA¹. Still, only one out of five public schools in New York City is

¹ The DOE refers to Fully Accessible for buildings built after 1992 that comply with all ADA design requirements. Partially Accessible allows person with mobility impairments to enter the building, have an accessible bathroom on the 1st floor, access relevant programs but not have access to upper floor classrooms or labs.

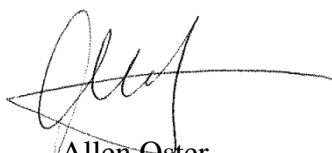
fully accessible. Consequently, students with physical disabilities are hindered from educational opportunities that should be available to all school-aged children in our city. The impact is most acute at the elementary school level as students cannot attend their zoned elementary schools and instead are forced to travel significant distances and make academic and curricular compromises to attend schools in buildings designed for better access. Three of the city's 32 school districts currently have no fully accessible elementary schools.

Community Board 4 strongly encourages both the Mayor and City Council to prioritize making funds available to ensure that as many students with physical difficulties as possible are able to take advantage of all activities offered. This would be another step toward creating equity for all in the New York City School System. We look forward to working with you to achieve this goal.

Sincerely,



Burt Lizarin
Chair
Community Board 4



Allen Oster
Co-Chair
ACES Committee

[signed 2/14/19]
Inge Ivchenko
Co-Chair
ACES Committee

cc: Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker, City Council
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Arise
Pie