

June 11, 2021

Hon. Mayor Bill de Blasio
Mayor of the City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Permit Issues Threaten Afterschool Programs and Pandemic Recovery

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

We appreciate the emphasis you place on the need for parents to return to work and our children to return to the classroom for the 2021-22 school year. Over the last year, our children took many steps backwards in learning and dealt with social/emotional issues as families struggled to find safe and affordable aftercare beyond the school day. With the return of all NYC students next fall, we want to ensure that the city's afterschool providers for elementary schools are fully supported. As the city reopens, these programs are vital to our children's well-being and to the financial stability of working families.

During the pandemic, the introduction of prohibitively expensive permitting fees by the Department of Education (DOE) forced many nonprofit afterschool program providers to drastically scale back the hours of afterschool services, close sites, or cancel services altogether. At this time, there is a lack of clarity regarding DOE permit fees and the ability to secure extended use permits for the 2021-22 school year, as well as for summer programs that rely on DOE permits.

Prior to the pandemic, DOE practice was to not charge nonprofit afterschool providers for permits for programs until 6:00 p.m. The agreement on this practice dates back to at least the Dinkins administration and was implemented in an effort to provide afterschool programs for the families of New York City. If the DOE does not immediately resume this practice, program providers will have no choice but to pass these costs on to families, who are ill-positioned to absorb such a burden, or to cancel programs entirely.

Time is running out for providers to plan safe, affordable and enriching programs for working families; schools and PTAs need to make collective decisions before the end of the school year to hire providers and ensure adequate time to plan logistics, register families, and coordinate financial aid.

We ask that you please immediately work to remove all roadblocks for nonprofit afterschool providers, many of whom are small corporations that employ educators, local artists, enrichment programs and childcare providers. We ask that you prioritize the needs of families who have been hit hardest by the pandemic by ensuring that children can receive safe, affordable, and enriching afterschool programming as parents and caregivers work to keep the city running. The providers and parent organizations signed below would welcome the opportunity to speak with you about this issue as soon as possible so that we can all work together to keep our city strong and our families and children supported.

Sincerely,

The Afterschool Permit Coalition (coalition in formation):

Riel Peerbooms - Executive Director, Trail Blazers
Bob Townley - Founder and Executive Director, Manhattan Youth
Sandy Phillips – Executive Director, Park Slope Afterschool Center at PS 107
Elizabeth Recio - Executive Director, Roads to Success
DJ Rouzeau – Executive Director, Kids Creative
Deborah Osbourne – PS 11 Programs Inc.
Barbara McGouran - Executive Director, PTA of PS 154 After School Program
PS 118 PTA Afterschool Planning Committee
Richard Berlin - Executive Director, DREAM

CC:

Meisha Porter, Chancellor, NYC DOE
Bill Chong, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development,
John Shea, Chief, NYC DOE Executive Division of School Facilities
Donald Conyers, First Deputy Chancellor, NYC DOE
Diana Ferrer Schwartz, Chief, Administrative Office, NYC DOE Division of School Facilities
Tim Lisante, NYC DOE ACCESS
Tom Taratko, NYC DOE School Operations, Space Management
Karen Watts, Executive Superintendent, Brooklyn North (Districts 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 23, 32, HS)
Barbara Freeman, Executive Superintendent, Brooklyn South (Districts 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, HS)
Marisol Rosales, Executive Superintendent, Manhattan (Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, HS)
Mabel Muñoz Sarduy, Executive Superintendent, Queens North (Districts 24, 25, 26, 30, HS)
Dr. Mauricière de Govia, Executive Superintendent, Queens South (Districts 27, 28, 29, HS)
Barbara Freeman, Acting Executive Superintendent, Staten Island (District 31, HS)
Tim Lisante, Executive Superintendent, D79/Adult Ed/Transfer
Corey Johnson, New York City Council
Brad Landers, New York City Council