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November 10, 2020

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

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

We write expressing our concern over the City's apparent disengagement in the Specialized High School Admissions Test ("SHSAT") and Gifted and Talented (G&T) programs. Over the past month, we have heard from frustrated parents about the lack of communication regarding SHSAT registration and testing dates, as well as delayed proceedings for the Pearson G&T contract.

As you know, parents and students in our communities strongly believe that specialized high schools and G&T programs are critical to student enrichment and success. That is why we have continued working closely with them to keep the SHSAT and introduced legislation to require G&T screening of all students to boost diversity in these programs. The City's inaction coupled with their refusal to listen to parents or work with elected officials communicating their concerns is disappointing. Moreover, not scheduling the SHSAT is in violation of state law.

We urge you to act immediately in addressing the concerns raised by parents by opening the SHSAT registration and taking the necessary steps to extend the G&T contract. While we understand that there are economic constraints to consider amid an evolving pandemic, now is not the time to pull back on investing in our students. Rather, we should be exploring ways to expand access to these opportunities as part of our mission to improve equity in education. We recognize the necessity of diversifying G&T programs and specialized high schools. However, neither City Hall nor the NYC Department of Education ("DOE") have kept an open dialogue with parents or community leaders regarding their interest in keeping these programs alive.

As we continue navigating the difficulties in our education system created by the pandemic, it is vitally important for the City and DOE to be proactive in their approach to our students' futures. We hope that you will take these concerns seriously and respond accordingly.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Toby Ann Stavisky in blue ink.

State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky
16th District

Handwritten signature of Nily Rozic in black ink.

Assemblywoman Nily Rozic
25th District