

December 6, 2018

The Honorable Richard A. Carranza
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Re: Relocation of PS 25

Dear Chancellor Carranza:

I hope this letter finds you well.

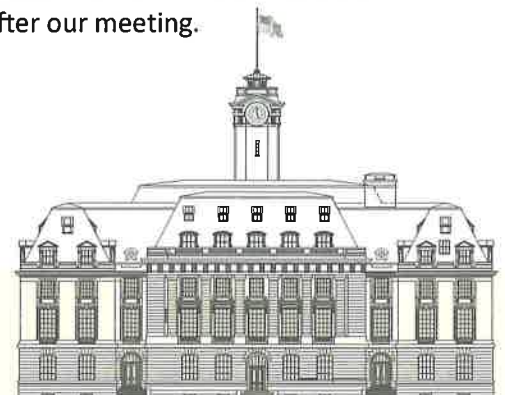
I am writing to reiterate my belief that the relocation of PS 25 North Annex must be among the highest priorities of your agency. On an almost daily basis, we are putting at great risk the safety, health and well-being of every child, teacher and administrator who enters that building. Here is a condensed version of my office's history with this site:

We have been voicing our concerns about this location for more than a year. Indeed, in 2017 we became aware that there was no safety agent at PS 25, where there are students who are emotionally disturbed.

In April of last school year, my office was informed by the school administration and the UFT that conditions were deplorable, including, among other things, the observation of mold, mouse droppings, roach infestation, and a strong smell of sewage.

In May, Kevin Moran reported that DOE Facilities were making repairs at the North Annex and would remediate any and all negative findings reported by the UFT. While conditions improved to some degree, they are simply not acceptable, and the lack of any safety agents remains a serious concern. Mr. Moran suggested that since students from PS 3 were articulating into PS 62, the children from PS 25 might move to PS 3. However, in June we were advised that the PS 3 site would be the new site for students who formerly attended Gingerbread Learning. The students of PS 25 were forced to remain in the sub-par conditions in a building owned by Staten Island Mental Health (SIMH), not owned nor leased by the NYC DOE.

Then, on October 24th of this year, members of my staff and I met with Deputy Chancellor Karin Goldmark at Borough Hall, where we strongly reiterated the inappropriateness of PS 25 as a school site. Deputy Chancellor Goldmark went to view and inspect the site directly after our meeting.



A few days later, we were notified by Principal McKeon that the space PS 25 had been using for outdoor physical education and recreation was being converted into a parking lot by SIMH. Then, on November 1, we were informed that construction was taking place during school hours - since this is not a DOE site. This would never be allowed on DOE property with students in the building.


On October 30, 2018, Peter Calandrella, our PEP member, alerted the NYC DOE & PEP to the deplorable conditions at PS 25. In late November, Deputy Chancellor Goldmark informed us of the DOE's desire to develop a "long term plan for the program (likely not involving that specific site)," but that "we do not expect to be able to move the students this school year or next."

Chancellor Carranza, I know Principal McKeon quite well and have a great deal of respect for him; he is a tough, seasoned professional and certainly not an alarmist. Simply put, this is not a fit site for students of any school system, let alone that of the greatest city in the world.

From our meetings I got the strong impression that you are the kind of hands-on, can-do Chancellor this school system needs. I ask that you please expedite the solution to this dangerous problem by directing your agency to find these at-risk youngsters a new home as soon as is humanly possible.

I am willing to meet anywhere, and at any time, to discuss this situation and to help expedite a solution. Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,


James S. Oddo
President, Borough of Staten Island