

September 28, 2018

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

Re: North Shore Annex of PS/IS 25

Dear Chancellor Carranza:

I hope this letter finds you well.

I am writing to urge you in the strongest possible terms to transfer students from the North Shore Annex of PS/IS 25 to a more suitable location.

The fact is that these District 75 students suffer daily in a facility that is unsuitable for any young boy or girl – a facility that is not a school building at all. Nor is it even a school site. Rather, these students are housed in a mental health facility, without any of the basic amenities that allow students to learn and prosper. As well, bear in mind that these are students with severe mental health challenges, and require those extreme service needs that accompany such students.

There are 110 students at this grossly sub-par facility, and ALL are classified as severely emotionally disabled. They are between six and thirteen years old, 1st through 8th grade, and they are taught in small, windowless classrooms – far too cramped for middle school students, teachers and support service adults.

There is no security or school safety agent assigned to the site, nor is there a gymnasium for them to meet physical education standards, or appropriate recreational and sports activities. There is no cafeteria, therefore they depend on satellite food to be brought in which does not allow for any diversity of nutritional choice and value.

The site has been plagued with mold, rodent droppings and overall unsafe conditions, prompting UFT petitions for immediate remediation. While these are currently being addressed by DOE Facilities Division, they are destined to recur

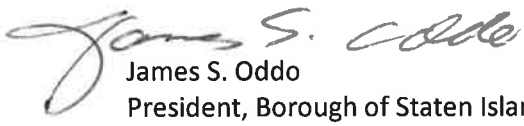


The building is owned by the Staten Island Mental Health Society (SIMHS), which provides the school with barely adequate internet service and bandwidth. Outside recess area is minimal and unacceptable.

It is also my understanding that the school is occupying the space without benefit of a lease, and that a lease is being negotiated now. In my opinion, to sign a lease at this juncture would be a very serious mistake – it will only make the much-needed, indeed, the inevitable relocation of this school a much more complicated process.

In closing, please let me reiterate my urgent request to re-locate these students as quickly as alternative space can be found. Our students deserve equity here, especially students who are at such high risk for academic failure and require the greatest social-emotional support we can offer.

Sincerely,

  
James S. Oddo  
President, Borough of Staten Island