

January 12, 2017

The Honorable Carmen Fariña
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Re: Pilot Program to Screen for Dyslexia

Dear Chancellor Fariña:

I hope this letter finds you well.

As you know from previous letters and conversations, I have made assisting students with dyslexia one of my educational priorities. I very much agree with Ignacio Estrada, who said "If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn."

Teaching children with dyslexia must, by definition, start with identifying those who are forced to cope with it. I am therefore requesting a pilot program whereby screenings will be done to identify dyslexic first graders.

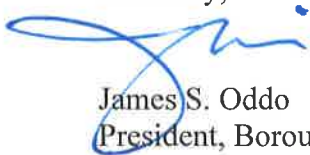
I understand, of course, the magnitude of this project and the cost in both money and manpower. However, I think we should start with perhaps only three or four Staten Island schools as a pilot, and screen only those students who have been identified by the schools as being below standards in reading, and who may be candidates for Response to Intervention (RTI) or for evaluations.

This will limit the universe of screenings to, I believe, a manageable number of students and will inform us as to the efficacy of broadening such screenings in the future. I also believe this would be a win/win situation whereby the process will help to inform teachers, counselors, student assessment teams and parents of some of the granular reasons their child is experiencing reading difficulties. This will enable all parties to implement specific strategies to address reading difficulties.

I hope you will take this suggestion under strong consideration. I, and my team, stand ready to help identify the schools where this might be most helpful, and can recommend a neuropsychologist – who is a DOE vendor – who would conduct on-site screenings.

Thank you for your kind attention, and I hope to hear from you soon

Sincerely,



James S. Oddo
President, Borough of Staten Island

