



SENATE AND ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY 12247



September 3, 2019

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

Dear Mayor de Blasio,

We want to add our voices opposing the recommendation from the School Diversity Advisory Group (SDAG) to eliminate the Gift and Talented (G&T) programs throughout New York City. As you know, for the past six years, we have been discussing improving these programs within the Department of Education (DOE) in conversations with both former Chancellor Carmen Fariña and Chancellor Carranza. In these dialogues, we have emphasized the need for increasing gifted and talented programs.


The SDAG study neglects to mention the effect that testing all children could have on increasing diversity within the public school system. In 2015, the School Board of Broward County in Florida issued a report that explained the results of testing each child in the second grade. They found hundreds of additional students who qualified and 84% of the students came from under-represented populations. Broward County saw an increase of 130% for Latino children and 80% for African-American children identified as gifted and talented.

After reading the Florida report, we introduced legislation (S3542/A2240) that required all students to be screened for gifted and talented programs (unless the parent “opts out”). The results are clear: our system is missing thousands of students who would benefit from a more accelerated learning atmosphere. Earlier this year the Independent Budget Office estimated it would cost the City \$3.8 million to test every student from Pre-K to 2nd grade. The return on investment would be invaluable for many of the underrepresented children throughout the City.

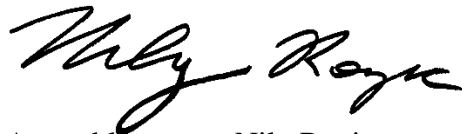
Our communities view the G&T as something positive within the public school system. We believe that the way to improve public education is not to eliminate what works but rather open doors for more students to reach their highest potential.

We should be creating more opportunities for diversity and for young people to thrive and hope that you and your administration will look to accomplish these goals by expanding programs and giving every child the opportunity to take gifted and talented classes.

Sincerely,



Sen. Toby Ann Stavisky
District 16



Assemblywoman Nily Rozic
District 25