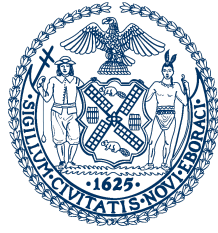


KEITH POWERS

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**THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF NEW YORK**

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February 2, 2022

The Hon. Kathy C. Hochul
Governor of the State of New York
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Commissioner Mary T. Bassett
New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower, Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Governor Hochul and Commissioner Bassett:

I write to you today regarding the current status of New York City's protocol for standalone private education services that operate outside of New York City Department of Education purview, as it pertains to their mandatory COVID-19 prevention measures. Standalone programs include many Pre-K programs, 3-K programs, as well as many private and charter schools.

Recently, New York City has permitted a "test-to-stay" model with their COVID-19 preventative measures for New York City public schools, stating students are permitted to attend classes in person if they or their parents say that they have tested negative via at-home test. This is a result of data collected that showed that an extremely small percentage of close contacts of public school students who test positive for the virus did not end up contracting it as well.

Implementing this model has prevented further temporary closures of in-person learning for our public school students. In-person learning has proven to be crucial to the development of the youth in our city. Of course, we ensure that our schools are still adhering to all of the proper safety measures and protocols to prevent the further spread of COVID-19.

New York City should use the same models and standards for our standalone education programs as our city's public schools. Currently, many Pre-K programs, 3-K programs, private schools, and charter schools throughout the city have had to find alternative options to remotely teach their students, due to having outdated COVID-19 measures in place. This is in addition to the immense strain that a sudden reversion to remote learning puts on parents who must scramble to find child-care, as many parents are not home throughout the day and work in-person jobs themselves.

I respectfully request that we allow our standalone education programs in our city to consider a similar "test-to-stay" model as our public schools have. Thank you for your time and consideration of my request.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Powers" with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Majority Leader Keith Powers
New York City Council, District 4

Cc: Chancellor David C. Banks, New York City Department of Education
Commissioner David A. Chokshi, MD, MSc, New York City Department of Health and
Mental Hygiene