



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER
SCOTT M. STRINGER

November 6, 2019

By Electronic Mail to Gabe Schnake-Mahl, GSchnakeMahl@schools.nyc.gov

Richard Carranza
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Re: Lead Based Paint Inspections and Remediation in Department of Education
Classrooms

Dear Chancellor Carranza,

Safeguarding our children from the severe harms associated with the ingestion of lead paint has been recognized as among this City's highest priorities. However, as we found in our office's recent investigation, eliminating childhood lead poisoning would require every City agency with responsibility for children, buildings and health not merely to abide by the letter of the law but to work proactively to pursue every opportunity to eliminate lead hazards and prevent exposure.

In that regard, I am writing to request information relating to the Department of Education's (DOE's) efforts over the past five years to identify and ameliorate lead paint hazards in our schools. Reporting from outlets such as WNYC has exposed instances of apparent lead contamination in the classrooms of some of DOE's youngest students. Indeed, DOE's subsequent reports of its own testing results revealed that as many as 1,860 classrooms contained lead paint conditions that required stabilization. One grade school in Queens that serves vulnerable children with physical and mental impairments was found to have as many as 32 classrooms requiring stabilization. Data provided to the public by DOE tells us that all classrooms with known lead hazards have now been stabilized and repaired, but the fact that 22 percent of the classrooms surveyed required intervention raises questions about the effectiveness of DOE's previous efforts to identify and preemptively address such issues.

To better understand how DOE addresses potential lead-based paint hazards in our schools and monitors conditions associated with such hazards, and pursuant to the Comptroller's authority under Section 93 of the New York City Charter, the Comptroller's Office requests that you provide the following records for all DOE schools for the five-year period that immediately precedes the date of your response:

Records of all surveys, inspections, and survey and inspection results evidencing or relating to DOE's efforts to identify potential lead-based paint hazards in schools, including but not limited to (i) every annual survey of the condition of

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surfaces in classrooms and other areas used by children under six years of age where the surfaces of such classrooms or other areas are covered with lead-based paint or paint of unknown lead content, and (ii) any and all survey and inspection results obtained through the use of XRF devices.

Please provide all such records in electronic, unlocked, native file format, sorted by school and by classroom, by December 6, 2019, to Dylan Hewitt, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, at dhewitt@comptroller.nyc.gov or 212-669-8056.

My understanding is that DOE is required to conduct annual surveys of the abovementioned areas and conditions, to record the results on forms provided by or acceptable to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and to provide copies of survey results to that department upon request (Section 43.23 of the New York City Health Code). Accordingly, I have requested the records for the most recent five-year period within a one month time frame, in the belief that they are readily available and can reasonably be provided within that time.

I would appreciate your acknowledging receipt of this letter by November 8, 2019, and including in your acknowledgment the name and contact information of your designated liaison who can facilitate DOE's response.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this inquiry, please call me at 212-669-3500.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,



Scott M. Stringer
New York City Comptroller