



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

April 1, 2020

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

Re: Opening Regional Enrichment Centers to Homeless Students

Dear Chancellor Carranza:

In this time of unprecedented challenge to the City, I first would like to offer my deep gratitude to you and all the teachers, principals, janitors, cafeteria staff, social workers, school librarians, parent coordinators, and countless other staff and administrators whose tireless work over the last several weeks to transform education in this City to remote learning is a remarkable example of New Yorkers' resilience in times of crisis.

As you know, I fully supported the Administration's decision to close schools during this current public health threat, despite the immense burden it places on both vulnerable populations and frontline workers with no childcare options. I applaud the DOE for its quick mobilization of the Regional Enrichment Centers, which are a critical safety net providing a supportive and nurturing environment for children whose parents are frontline responders.

However, in addition to the children of frontline responders, I believe it is important that these sites also be open to children living in shelters, who often lack access to the spaces and supports that are essential for remote learning. I echo the call from New York City's leading non-profit organizations and coalitions that work with homeless children, and urge you to expand enrollment in the Regional Enrichment Centers to homeless students.

While I understand there may be operational challenges involved in this task, providing homeless families access to these sites will go a long way toward alleviating stress and hardship for families who may already be struggling to meet their children's educational needs. The economic reality we face as a City is all the more daunting for homeless families, who risk losing their jobs if they do not have access to reliable childcare. For students who are homeless, the stability and continuity of a safe learning environment could make the difference between keeping pace and falling behind their peers. We simply cannot afford the devastating consequences for these children if they fall further behind.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request. I look forward to your swift action on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott M. Stringer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and flourishes.

Scott M. Stringer
New York City Comptroller