



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**  
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

**SCOTT STRINGER**  
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

April 9, 2013

Jennifer Maldonado  
Executive Director  
Education Construction Fund  
30-30 Thomson Avenue, 4th Floor  
Long Island City, NY 11101

Dear Ms. Maldonado:

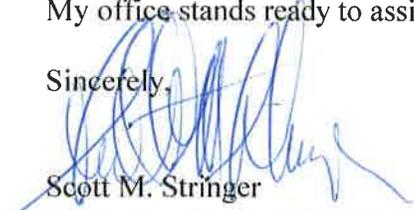
Congratulations on being named Executive Director of the Education Construction Fund (ECF). The ECF plays an important role in our city and I look forward to working with you to identify and develop new school sites throughout the borough.

As you are aware, my office had been in contact with your predecessor regarding the current proposal to redevelop one of three school sites: P.S. 191, P.S. 199, or the School for Cooperative Technical Education. On March 1st, I hosted a meeting on this proposal with Department of Education Deputy Chancellor Kathleen Grimm, former ECF Executive Director Jamie Smarr, School Construction Authority President Lorraine Grillo, local elected officials, community boards, and concerned parents and advocates. During this meeting I suggested that it would be beneficial to all involved if the chosen redevelopment site could be revealed as soon as possible. While I understand that your office had not made a definitive decision at that time, I reiterate my position and urge you to expedite your site selection process.

There is much misinformation circulating among concerned parents and neighbors and many are convinced their quality of life will be harmed should this proposal come to fruition in their neighborhood. I request that ECF announce which of the three sites will be chosen as soon as possible to give the community time to weigh in on the Request for Proposal (RFP) and evaluate the proposal as a whole.

My office stands ready to assist you in any way. Please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

  
Scott M. Stringer  
Manhattan Borough President

cc: Kathleen Grimm, Deputy Chancellor, Department of Education  
Lorraine Grillo, President, School Construction Authority  
Mark Diller, Chair, Community Board 7  
Matthew Washington, Chair, Community Board 11

MUNICIPAL BUILDING • 1 CENTRE STREET, 19TH FLOOR • NEW YORK, NY 10007  
PHONE (212) 669-8300 FAX (212) 669-4306

WWW.MANHATTANBP.ORG



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**  
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

**SCOTT M. STRINGER**  
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

March 18, 2013

Kathleen Grimm  
Deputy Chancellor  
New York City Department of Education  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Deputy Chancellor Grimm:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with my office, elected officials and parent leaders on March 1, 2013 regarding the Education Construction Fund's (ECF) Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI). I appreciate your commitment to working with all stakeholders while developing these plans and look forward to a productive and collaborative dialogue as we formulate a community engagement process to review any potential development.

The three sites under consideration for redevelopment: P.S. 191, P.S. 199 and the School for Cooperative Technical Education are located in high density, residential neighborhoods. Although no site has been selected, there has been significant community concern expressed about this proposal and its potential negative impact on communities.

Per our discussion on March 1, I am writing to memorialize the commitments made by DOE (Department of Education) and ECF in that meeting: It is my understanding that any temporary relocation facility will be within the existing catchment zone for the selected school; the impacted school community will be kept together during construction; and any new facility will include added capacity to relieve present overcrowding and accommodate the incoming student population resulting from any new development.

In addition, there has been great concern over whether the proposed projects would be subject to the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). The RFEI clearly states that ULURP is not required. However, DOE has indicated that it will require the developer of any of the sites to seek a special permit, which would trigger a limited ULURP review.

I appreciate your commitment to a transparent public approval process, but after thoroughly examining the issue it is my understanding that the ULURP actions associated with this project are not mandatory and, even if sought, may be narrow in scope. The community engagement that ULURP is designed to ensure is critical for the long term success of such a controversial proposal. In this case, ULURP would not simply be a regulatory mechanism. It would allow the

community to have a voice on a project that will affect both the short- and long-term education of their children. When ULURP is broad and comprehensive in scope, it is an appropriate place to have those discussions and ensures a robust and transparent process.

I appreciate your willingness to meet with us on this issue and have a continued dialogue. I respectfully request a written reassurance of your commitment to keep the impacted school community together and within the catchment zone, to increase school capacity with any new construction, and to guarantee a ULURP process that encompasses the project in its totality.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. I look forward to working together to ensure an open and transparent process.

Sincerely,



Scott M. Stringer  
Manhattan Borough President

cc: Hon. Jerrold Nadler, U.S. Representative, 10<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Charles B. Rangel, U.S. Representative, 13<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senate, 27<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. José E. Serrano, New York State Senate, 29<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Linda B. Rosenthal, New York State Assembly, 67<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Robert J. Rodriguez, New York State Assembly, 68<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, New York City Council, 6<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Melissa Mark-Viverito, New York City Council, 8<sup>th</sup> District  
Christine Annechino, President, District 3 Community Education Council  
Shino Tanakawa, President, District 2, Community Education Council  
Michelle Ciulla-Lipkin, Co-President, District 3 Presidents' Council  
Rachel Laiserin, Co-President, District 3 Presidents' Council  
Matthew Chook, Co-President, District 2 Presidents' Council  
Josselyne Herman-Saccio, Co-President, District 2 Presidents' Council  
Maria Verdesoto, Principal, P.S. 191  
Katy Rosen, Principal, P.S. 199  
John Widlund, Principal, School of Cooperative Technology  
Community Board 7  
Community Board 11



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**  
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

**SCOTT M. STRINGER**  
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

Dennis Walcott  
Chancellor  
New York City Department of Education  
Tweed Courthouse  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

Lorraine Grillo  
President  
New York City School Construction Authority  
30-30 Thomson Avenue  
Long Island City, NY 11101

Jamie Smarr  
Executive Director  
New York City Educational Construction Fund  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

February 12, 2013

Dear Chancellor Walcott, Ms. Grillo, and Mr. Smarr:

I am writing to express my concerns about three potential Department of Education (“DOE”) school redevelopment proposals that have come to the attention of my office in recent months, and the potential impact on Manhattan families and educators.

I understand that the DOE, School Construction Authority (“SCA”) and Education Construction Fund (“ECF”) have solicited and are reviewing proposals to redevelop three parcels of city-owned land in Manhattan. Currently occupying these sites are two elementary schools, P.S. 191 and P.S. 199 located at 210 West 61<sup>st</sup> Street and 270 West 70<sup>th</sup> Street respectively, and the School of Cooperative Technical Education at 321 East 96<sup>th</sup> Street, which serves over-age, under-credited youth.

As these parcels are DOE controlled, they are not subject to the Uniform Land Use Review Process (“ULURP”) and it is unclear whether there would be any formal process for the public to weigh in. While in the normal course of development on city-owned land there would be ample opportunity to evaluate the potential impacts on both education and the surrounding neighborhood, no such uniform

MUNICIPAL BUILDING • 1 CENTRE STREET, 19TH FLOOR • NEW YORK, NY 10007

PHONE (212) 669-8300 FAX (212) 669-4306

[WWW.MBPO.ORG](http://WWW.MBPO.ORG)



process exists in this case. I am deeply concerned that the DOE has left administrators and families unnecessarily in the dark about the potential impacts.

In recent weeks, parent leaders and educators from P.S. 191, P.S. 199, and The School of Cooperative Technical Education have registered concerns with my office about the DOE's Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI) and Request for Proposal (RFP) processes. In the absence of meaningful information from the DOE, SCA or ECF about potential development plans, these stakeholders have been left to speculate about the status and implications of potential plans, including: (a) if their school will be demolished imminently, (b) where the DOE will send students, teachers and staff whose buildings it has torn down, and (c) the length of time it might take before impacted children can return to their home school. As you can imagine, this has created significant anxiety.

Concerns have also been raised about the impact of relocating already swelling numbers of students from P.S. 199 to other parts of the borough, particularly if that school undergoes redevelopment at the same time as P.S. 191 – the DOE's default overflow site for P.S. 199 located just nine blocks away. The simultaneous relocation of students from both schools would not only disrupt the education of thousands of children, it would also place an excessive burden on families who moved intentionally within the confines of the two schools' zones so their children could attend a highly-ranked public school.

Additionally, beyond the potential impacts on the families, teachers and administrators, this redevelopment plan could have impacts on the larger community. New development can increase traffic, impact neighborhood character and add a new population to an area that already lacks school seats and other residential amenities. These impacts would normally get a full review in ULURP; however, as noted above, no such process is anticipated for this site.

Finally, I am troubled that the DOE's redevelopment plans could wipe out nearly \$21 million in City taxpayer dollars it has already invested in capital improvements to these three school buildings, including:

- \$9,351,650 towards light fixture upgrades and exterior roof and building façade repairs at P.S. 191 in 2013;
- \$3,113,486 towards interior capital upgrades – currently in progress – at P.S. 199;
- \$8,470,191 in capital improvements at the School for Cooperative Technical Education, which the SCA completed just last year.

I sincerely hope the DOE does not intend to take the fiscally irresponsible step of demolishing three buildings into which it has just invested \$20,935,327 in taxpayer dollars for capital improvements without first engaging parents, administrators, and community stakeholders.

There is no denying that in New York City we must think creatively and proactively about redevelopment opportunities that allow us to develop badly needed capacity and state-of-the-art facilities for schoolchildren. But we have to do this responsibly and transparently.

My office has written three reports on school overcrowding and convened numerous meetings with the DOE and stakeholders over the years to address the need for long-term planning. Together we have

shown that we can plan smarter and more efficiently by working collaboratively and at the neighborhood level. In that spirit, I urge the DOE to open up its communication regarding these three proposals and work with potentially impacted stakeholders to address their concerns.

While I understand ECF will be attending Community Education Council 3's calendar meeting tomorrow, I would additionally like to convene a meeting with elected officials, representatives from the DOE, SCA and ECF, parent leaders and leadership of P.S. 191, P.S. 199 and The School for Cooperative Technical Education, so we can collectively address the following:

- DOE's anticipated timeline for any prospective redevelopment of P.S. 191, P.S. 199 and The School for Cooperative Technical Education, including potential relocation sites;
- Stakeholders' questions and concerns about the potential impact of these proposals on students, schools and the neighborhood; and
- DOE's next steps and long term plans.

I appreciate your time and consideration of this matter and look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



Scott M. Stringer  
Manhattan Borough President

Cc: Hon. Jerrold Nadler, U.S. Representative, 10<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Charles B. Rangel, U.S. Representative, 13<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senate, 27<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. José E. Serrano, New York State Senate, 29<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Linda B. Rosenthal, New York State Assembly, 67<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Robert J. Rodriguez, New York State Assembly, 68<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, New York City Council, 6<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Melissa Mark-Viverito, New York City Council, 8<sup>th</sup> District  
Christine Annechino, President, District 3 Community Education Council  
Shino Tanakawa, President, District 2, Community Education Council  
Michelle Ciulla-Lipkin, Co-President, District 3 Presidents' Council  
Rachel Laiserin, Co-President, District 3 Presidents' Council  
Matthew Chook, Co-President, District 2 Presidents' Council  
Josselyne Herman-Saccio, Co-President, District 2 Presidents' Council  
Maria Verdesoto, Principal, P.S. 191  
Katy Rosen, Principal, P.S. 199  
John Widlund, Principal, School of Cooperative Technology