



MICHAEL REILLY  
Assemblyman 62<sup>nd</sup> District

THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER  
Committee on Cities

COMMITTEES  
Aging  
Alcoholism and Drug Abuse  
Higher Education  
Housing

May 6, 2019

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

Hon. Michael Ryan  
Executive Director,  
New York City Board of Elections  
32 Broadway, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
New York, NY 10004

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

Hon. James O'Neill  
Commissioner,  
New York City Police Department  
1 Police Plaza,  
New York, NY 10038

Dear Mayor de Blasio, Director Ryan, Chancellor Carranza, and Commissioner O'Neill:

As you are aware, New Yorkers will participate in early voting for the very first time later this year. I am writing to each of you as stakeholders in this process, specifically to express my concern over the extended use of local school buildings as poll sites for the 12-day duration of early voting. I understand that seven locations have already been announced for Staten Island, including one public school and two parochial schools. Further, I understand that consideration is being given to add additional sites throughout the city, including on Staten Island, to bring the total site count to 200. While I certainly commend each of you for supporting this endeavor to make voting easier, I urge you to pause for a moment and consider the following.

To put it simply, the extended use of local school buildings for the duration of early voting is unfair to students, teachers, and administrators. In fact, it is disruptive because often the room chosen to facilitate the voting machines is the school's cafeteria, gymnasium, or sometimes even the building's main lobby. This affects how students move throughout the building and could even result in them missing valuable academic time due to the inconvenience. Until recently, a normal election year would disrupt school operations for a maximum of four days, allowing voters to participate in the twice-yearly primary election, a general election, and possibly the rare special election. Under early voting though, students and staff will be inconvenienced for a maximum of 36 days per year, just so that voters can participate in one primary election, one general election, and possibly a special election. As someone who advocated for students, teachers, administrators, and parents for nearly a decade on the Community Education Council, I find it ridiculous that using our local schools to shoulder this burden was even considered in the first place.

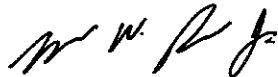
A more pressing issue though is the impact this will have on school safety. I believe it is dangerous to figuratively leave the door wide open of select school buildings throughout the city for this long a period, especially when only one uniformed police officer will be assigned to each site. At a time when

parents are most worried about their child's safety at school and many have advocated for increased security measures in their child's school building, it is unwise to even consider opening these buildings to the public in such a way.

On that note, I would like to request that the decision to use local school buildings –whether of a public, private, or parochial institution – be reconsidered. There are dozens of alternate locations throughout the city which would be appropriate early voting sites, including community centers, libraries, and institutions of higher education to name a few. If that request is not practical, I ask that the Police Department expand their poll site detail from one officer to two, the additional being solely responsible for school security.

I appreciate your consideration of my requests and I am hopeful that we can find a resolution that is beneficial to all New Yorkers, including our students. If you have any questions or would like to speak with me directly about this matter, please contact my office at (718) 967-5194.

Yours in Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Reilly'.

Michael Reilly  
Member of Assembly  
62<sup>nd</sup> District