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THE COUNCIL  
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**ERIC A. ULRICH**  
COUNCIL MEMBER  
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March 18, 2021

Chancellor Meisha Ross Porter  
New York City Department of Education  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

Chancellor Porter:

I know that educating our students while we are in the middle of a pandemic has not been an easy task for the Dept. of Education (DOE) and its staff. While I commend DOE and its unprecedented efforts to transition from in-person learning to remote learning during the peak of the pandemic, the frequent closures at schools in my district have been especially challenging for students and parents.

I am writing to urge you to reconsider the current standards and protocols for closing school buildings with regards to COVID-19. For more than a year now, students have had their entire academic lives upended by the pandemic. Distance learning simply does not provide the same quality of education and necessary social interaction for our students. Additionally, as parents and guardians have been returning to work, finding childcare during the school hours has become a massive burden – and oftentimes, a costly one. During a time of such economic uncertainty, we cannot afford to put parents in a position where they must choose between putting food on the table and caring for their child during school hours.

In recent months, schools in my district have been opened and closed so many times that hundreds of parents have contacted my office to complain. In some cases, entire buildings were closed on account of just two positive cases. While we can all agree that the safety of our children and DOE staff is the highest of priorities – no other businesses, offices, or facilities have such strict guidelines for closures. In order to begin returning to normalcy, it is imperative we provide our children in-person learning and reopen our schools.

I thank you for your time and consideration to the matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric A. Ulrich".

Eric A. Ulrich  
NYC Council Member  
District 32

NK/RS:EU