



DEBORAH J. GLICK
Assemblymember 66th District
New York County

The Assembly State of New York

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Higher Education Committee
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Environmental Conservation
Governmental Operations
Rules
Ways & Means

January 12, 2017

Mayor Bill de Blasio
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio,

I am writing to raise concerns about the racial and socio-economic segregation at many public schools in New York City. In 2017, it is a bit disturbing that a city with a diverse population has students of color clustered in schools with dismal educational resources while white students with financial security, living just a few blocks away, are often afforded a better quality education. This long standing issue was recently highlighted at a number of Community Educational Council (CEC) meetings often around proposals to redraw school zones. There needs to be a renewed interest within the Department of Education to find a systemic solution to diversify schools and improve upon the enrollment and admission process throughout New York City so that all of our students can receive the best education.

According to various studies, such as a 2014 study conducted by the UCLA Civil Rights Project, and other comparative school district analyses, New York City schools are more segregated than districts in the South. This should not be the case. A number of local proposals have tried to remedy the issue of segregated schools in New York City, but none have been successful. There needs to be a city-wide mandate to desegregate schools.

One way to combat this problem is through controlled choice-an educational policy proposal that allows parents to pick their top school choices for their children. Parent selections are then filtered through demographic algorithmic variables prior to assignment of schools in order to ensure the student body at every school is racially and socio-economically diverse. The benefit of controlled choice is evident. It works to ensure that students are not necessarily zoned by their address, but by a convergence of variables to ensure that the student population of any given school reflects the city diversity in order to create a more inclusive learning environment. I, along with a number of CEC's, believe this could be an effective policy solution.

Education should serve as a tool to lift people out of poverty and create an equitable playing field for all of our students. Controlled choice is one way we can achieve this goal. Desegregating schools in New York City would also have an impact on improving the trajectory of countless individuals entering the workforce who are often suddenly awakened to the reality that they are ill equipped to handle the demands of a 21st century, internationally competitive, global economy. The evidence suggests controlled choice deserves consideration as a way to reevaluate how school admission and enrollment processes are handled within the Department of Education.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. I look forward to hearing from you and our team on ways to address this problem moving forward in 2017.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deborah J. Glick". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Deborah J. Glick
Assemblymember

CC: Carmen Farina, Chancellor, New York City Department of Education