



270 West 70 Street  
New York, NY 10023

Phone: 212-799-1033  
Fax: 212-799-1179

Louise Xerri, Principal  
Brendan Beseda, Asst. Principal

November 7, 2016

The Honorable Carmen Fariña  
New York City Department of Education  
Tweed Courthouse  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chancellor Fariña,

We are writing to express our appreciation for the efforts of the DOE and the CEC3 to address the serious overcrowding at PS199. The educational, logistical and safety issues created by having over 1000 staff and students in a building with capacity of 642 is of ongoing concern to our community. Congestion in hallways, stairwells, and shared spaces such as the cafeteria and yard is risking the safety of students and staff.

This overcrowding issue has required the attention of our teachers, administrative staff, PTA Executive Board, and the School Leadership Team (“SLT”) for well into our second year now. We have spent countless hours attending meetings, gathering information and advocating for the educational best interests of our children. As a result of our involvement and engagement with this issue, we continue to be in agreement that the zone size of PS 199 needs to be reduced in a meaningful way to have any chance at right-sizing our enrollment to match building capacity.

We greatly appreciate that CEC3, in its letter to you dated October 18, 2016, is supporting our need to limit the Kindergarten intake at 5 classes to maintain educational quality and safety in our school, and is arguing for an ironclad commitment from the DOE to maintain this enrollment cap. We understand that the DOE has proposed a number of zoning scenarios that will meet this objective. We commend the CEC3 for reviewing these plans, along with the huge amount of community input and other data, in an effort to make an informed decision regarding any final DOE 2017 Zoning Plan. We hope that whatever the final plan, it meaningfully addresses and alleviates overcrowding, while also actively moving towards a more diverse public elementary school system in the Upper West Side. To that end, the SLT welcomes zoning changes aimed at increasing socio-economic diversity in ours and neighboring schools.

In addition, the SLT fully supports and reiterates the conditions of rezoning previously agreed to by the DOE whereby all current PS199 students remain at PS199, and their younger siblings are grandfathered to also attend PS199, should those children remain residents of the current PS199 zone.

This is a scary, frustrating, and anxiety-inducing process for PS 199 families in buildings and blocks facing the prospect of being rezoned to different schools. Each family in the PS 199 community and each resident of this neighborhood will be impacted in different ways by a rezoning; however, for our children, a solution to resolve overcrowding at PS199 must not be delayed. We stress the need for the DOE to put forth a zoning solution now so that the overcrowding and uncertainty overshadowing District 3 enrollment is removed for 2017.

Yours Faithfully,

PS199 School Leadership Team

cc:

Community Education Council for District 3

Deputy Chancellor Elizabeth Rose, NYC Department of Education Division of Operations

Superintendent Ilene Altschul, NYC Community School District 3

Honorable Linda Rosenthal, New York State Assembly Member

Honorable Brad Hoylman, New York State Senator

Honorable Helen Rosenthal, NYC Councilmember

Honorable Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President