



THE COUNCIL OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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SPEAKER

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May 23rd, 2026

Commissioner Escamilla-Davies
New York City Department of Youth and Community Development
2 Lafayette Street, 19th floor
New York, NY 10007

RE: Manhattan Youth's after-school programming

Dear Commissioner Escamilla-Davies,

We are writing to express the serious concerns being raised by middle school administrators and families across New York City following the loss of numerous afterschool programming contracts previously held by Manhattan Youth. Schools that have relied on Manhattan Youth for nearly a decade were informed, with little to no warning, that their longstanding provider would no longer be returning.

This abrupt transition has created significant uncertainty within school communities, many of which are deeply concerned about the impact a sudden change in providers will have on students and families. Principals and parents alike have described Manhattan Youth as “irreplaceable” because of the organization’s ability to coordinate and deliver comprehensive afterschool programming tailored to each school community’s needs. Their offerings extend well beyond basic programming and include athletics, arts enrichment, tutoring, and SHSAT preparation, among many other activities.

School leaders have also raised concerns that several of the newly selected providers appear to offer far more limited programming, leaving families worried about whether students will continue to have access to the same breadth and quality of opportunities they have come to rely upon.

In addition to the significant impact this change in provider will have on students and families, there are serious concerns regarding the transparency and consistency of the selection process. Schools were not given an opportunity to meet or evaluate the newly selected providers before a decision was made to replace the current provider.

DYCD has confirmed that provider assignments and renewals are based on a combination of DYCD evaluations and feedback from school principals. However, school administrators, families, and our offices continue to question how this process resulted in the termination of multiple Manhattan Youth contracts despite the strong support the organization has received from school communities across the district.

Given the number of unanswered questions surrounding this process, we respectfully request clarification on the following:

- Why did Manhattan Youth retain contracts at certain middle schools but not others?
- If Manhattan Youth received a viable score during DYCD's review process, why were several of its contracts nonetheless rescinded?
- What criteria and methodology does DYCD use to evaluate and score afterschool providers?
- Were school principals informed that rating Manhattan Youth's performance as good or satisfactory, rather than excellent, could result in the termination of the provider's contract?
- Was Manhattan Youth removed from any schools that rated the organization's performance as excellent?
- In light of the overwhelming support from school administrators and families, will DYCD reconsider the decision to rescind Manhattan Youth's contracts?

The lack of notice provided to principals, coupled with an opaque selection process that resulted in contracts being awarded to providers unfamiliar to school communities, has understandably created significant uncertainty and frustration.

Given the broad support from school leaderships and families for Manhattan Youth's continued role in these programs, we respectfully urge DYCD to reevaluate these award decisions and provide impacted schools with a meaningful opportunity for review and reconsideration. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to your prompt response.

Very truly yours,

New York City Council Speaker Julie Menin

Council Member Virginia Maloney



Council Member Harvey Epstein

Assembly Member Ketih Powers

