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June 15, 2026

Commissioner Escamilla-Davies
New York City Department of Youth and Community Development
2 Lafayette Street, 19th Floor
New York, NY 10007
RE: Demanding Transparency and Reconsideration of Manhattan Youth After-School Contracts

Dear Commissioner Escamilla-Davies,

I write to express my strong concerns regarding the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)'s sudden and striking decision to strip Manhattan Youth and other community-based organizations of long-standing after-school programming contracts. This decision has left principals and parents across the East Side and New York City with many questions and too-few answers as they face the removal of trusted providers they have grown to know and trust for over a decade. While I was unable to attend the May 26th meeting between your department and my colleagues, my staff and I have been fully briefed on those discussions and have been made aware of your most recent response to the concerns raised by city officials, which left many significant questions unanswered. I remain unconvinced at this time that the current course of action serves the best interests of families on the East Side of Manhattan, but I write in the hope that DYCD can make up for a brazen lack of transparency and communication in order to ensure principals and parents that contracts were fairly awarded and that programming will remain available.

As you are by no doubt aware, DYCD's decision to radically re-award COMPASS after-school program contracts took the communities long-served by trusted providers like Manhattan Youth by surprise. Since these contract decisions were first announced, my office has experienced an outpouring of communication from outraged parents and school leaders across Assembly District 73—which serves the Upper East Side down to Murray Hill and Midtown East. Families are uniform in their frustration: trusted, premier providers have been discarded with zero community input, leaving parents facing a chaotic transition just months before the school year begins. To my understanding, DYCD failed to provide any signal to principals that their chosen providers were at risk of non-selection, nor did DYCD provide any explanation as to why these providers were passed over in favor of providers without a track record in the communities they will now be expected to serve.

Most notably, many principals and parents have passionately attested that Manhattan Youth's offerings are high-quality programs that foster genuine community and keep adolescents constructively engaged. Our office has heard rave reviews about the theater and sports programs, especially. I share the concerns of my constituents and neighbors that the incoming, less-experienced providers will fail to match the standard Manhattan Youth established.

In addition to school-based programs, I understand that DYCD has re-awarded community center-based programs such that underserved communities will be left without any programming at all. Specifically, I

am concerned that DYCD has only awarded a single community center-based program across Manhattan Community Districts 2, 4, 6 and 6 - meaning that for Manhattanites without a school-based program between Canal St. (on the West Side) and 14th St. (on the East Side) and 59th St., the only option will be a single program site on West 52nd St. I am shocked that needy students (for example, NYCHA residents who to-date have had on-site programming) will be deprived of such vital resources, and even more concerned that DYCD has (to my knowledge) failed to provide providers with *any* substantive answers about why their proposals were rejected.

DYCD has plainly failed to communicate and explain why its opaque, bureaucratic contract award process will leave my constituents without their preferred, trusted afterschool providers for at least the six-year contract cycle. To ensure public accountability and protect our student communities, I echo my colleagues in requesting that DYCD immediately provide the following:

- A full, unredacted list of the scores received by pre-existing school-based providers (including but not limited to Manhattan Youth) and the winning providers for every school site where existing contracts were not renewed.
- The specific principal ratings and feedback rubrics factored into these decisions so communities can see how the preferences of their principals were weighed against internal agency metrics.
- Attendance and student engagement data for pre-existing school-based provider programs, alongside metrics for the alternative providers selected to replace them, to verify they can successfully engage this demographic.
- A full, unredacted list of the scores received by pre-existing community center-based providers and the winning providers within Manhattan.
- A copy of the rubric and scoring methodology used to evaluate after-school provider applications to assess whether this process was conducted fairly and consistently.
- A mechanism allowing affected students, parents, and school administrators to petition for a review and reversal of these award decisions.

At a time when cynicism and apathy present a real threat to our democracy, strong civic engagement—especially among young people—bolstered by municipalities is a powerful defense. When the government can help provide stellar sports and theater programs, it goes a long way to build trust with young people, in addition to enriching their lives. Making rash decisions with little warning or transparency about the future of beloved programs does not honor this mission and actively damages the trust our families place in city programming. I strongly urge DYCD to pause the implementation of these new awards, thoroughly evaluate the specific data requested above, and re-engage with the families who rely on these vital services every single day.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter. I look forward to your detailed response.

Very truly yours,



Assemblymember Alex Bores
73rd District