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October 19, 2026

Kamar Samuels
Chancellor
New York City Public Schools
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Celeste Ramirez
President
NYC School Construction Authority
25-01 Jackson Avenue
Long Island City, NY 11101

Dear Chancellor Samuels and President Ramirez:

On behalf of the ARISE Coalition, a group of parents, advocates, educators, and academics who have been working together since 2008 to push for systemic changes to improve day-to-day experiences and long-term outcomes for students with disabilities in New York City, we are writing to reiterate the importance of **investing an additional \$450 million in this November's 2025–2029 Capital Plan Proposed Amendment**—for a total investment of \$1.25 billion—**to improve school accessibility**.

Although it has been more than 35 years since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, only about a third of New York City public schools are fully accessible. When schools are inaccessible, students often have to travel long distances on an already overstressed busing system to receive their education and miss out on opportunities to build formative relationships with students in their own communities. Inaccessible schools also raise employment challenges for educators and staff with physical disabilities while limiting opportunities for relatives and community members with physical disabilities to attend important gatherings like PTA meetings or school plays.

A decade ago, the situation was much worse, with fewer than one in five schools fully accessible as of 2018, so we are encouraged by the City's progress with the funding thus far allocated to school accessibility and appreciate the \$800 million allocated in the 2025–2029 Capital Plan to continue making additional schools accessible. However, while the City should be taking steps to *accelerate* the timeline for eliminating physical barriers to full inclusion in our public schools, the allocation in the current Capital Plan does not even allow the City to keep pace with the progress made under the last Capital Plan, once inflation is taken into account. At the current level of investment, it would take *ten* five-year capital plans to reach full accessibility. That's *50 more years* of inaccessibility and exclusion, contrary to the promise of the ADA. Conversely, \$1.5 billion in sustained funding for school accessibility would cut that time in half.

As you consider the upcoming amendment to the current Capital Plan, we urge you to help address the problem of the inaccessibility of our schools by investing at least **an additional \$450 million for school accessibility projects**. This would bring the total investment in the current Capital Plan to \$1.25 billion. With this money, the City could make an estimated 45 percent of NYC public schools fully accessible by the end of the current plan and come that much closer to realizing the unmet promise of the ADA for students, families and communities with disabilities.

We would be happy to discuss this issue further. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chijindu Obiofuma

Jindu Obiofuma

Coordinator, Action for Reform in Special Education (ARISE)