

State of New York.

2. I am a parent of four children who attend New York City public schools. My child, M.Y.M., is entering seventh (7th) grade at PS/MS 280; my child, J.M., is entering fourth (4th) grade at PS/MS 280; my child, M.L.M is entering tenth (10th) grade at The High School for Fashion Industries; and my child M.M. is entering ninth (12th) grade at Harry S. Truman High School.

3. I am very concerned about the New York City Department of Education's plan to expand online learning next year, especially since the guidance they released for school administrators and staff appears to allow students to be placed in these classes without prior parent knowledge or consent. My experience over many years as an active parent in New York City public schools is that communication and coordination with parents are unreliable at best, and if schools are allowed to put students in online classes without consent, too many parents will never know this has happened or will never become aware of it until it is too late to re-assign them to a regular class.

4. My children's experience with online learning during the pandemic varied, from very positive to quite negative, and they were only minimally able to achieve the level of engagement and support from virtual learning for them to do their best.

5. Two of my middle children were very tech savvy before they went into remote learning. They also were given textbooks and extra materials/supplies to use alongside during asynchronous and synchronous learning. This support contributed to their positive experience, and they were able to keep up with their grade-level expectations.

6. The experience was not positive, however, for all of my children. In particular my eldest child who is graduating from high school this year had a negative experience. He has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and attends a District 75 Inclusion school; online learning was particularly challenging for him.

7. First, the Department of Education (DOE) was not able to provide an appropriate device with a large screen like a laptop, with accessibility applications or software to accommodate his disability; though he had an iPad issued by DOE's visions services as his assistive technology for in-class use prior to the pandemic. However, apps on his AT (assistive technology) were locked; therefore, he was not able to use his iPad at all at home. Since his full-day instructional setting was in a general education classroom, and it had pivoted to a virtual classroom, he was no longer able to participate fully in a virtual setting without his AT and his other IEP accommodations.

8. Even after all his mandated in-school IEP services and supports were switched over to remote learning with multiple digital-platforms, he was left behind technologically, academically, socially, and emotionally. When he returned to in-person learning in 11th grade, he showed visible signs of regression and learning loss.

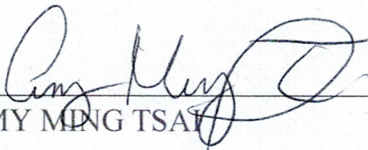
9. Although remote recovery SEL (social-emotional learning) services and extra related-services were offered to students with IEPs like my son, in the fall of 2021, I was not informed of these additional services until after they had begun in late November 2021 when I was told by my son's paraprofessional to have him join Zoom. I was then told that the DOE had automatically enrolled and included students with IEPs without having individual IEP meetings and without any of their parents' knowledge or agreement.

10. My other son who is entering 12th grade next year also has an IEP, and I worry about him and all other students with disabilities being shunted off into online classes, without a careful analysis to show that this will fulfill their learning needs. An IEP meeting with a parent present and a discussion should be the minimum requirement before any such radical change in their learning environment is even contemplated.

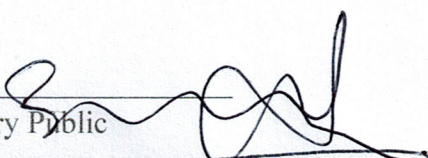
11. Thus, I urge the Commissioner to make sure that prior, documented, and enforceable parent consent is obtained for all New York City public school students before

they are assigned to any virtual or blended class, as the New York State education regulations properly require.

Dated: June __, 2024
Bronx, New York


AMY MING TSAI

Sworn to before me this 14th
day of June, 2024.


Notary Public
SANJAYKUMAR K. RUDANI
Notary Public State of New York
Bronx County, # 01RU6082273
My Commission Expires
October 21, 2026

