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April 8, 2016

Mayor Bill De Blasio
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Commissioner William J. Bratton
1 Police Plaza Path
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor De Blasio and Commissioner Bratton,

I write on behalf of the public elementary and middle schools that will serve as polling sites in my district (Council District 6) for the Primary Election Days on April 19th, June 28th and September 13th, 2016. For the past several years I have heard from schools on the various problems that arise from keeping schools open for the primary vote; interrupted and limited breakfast and lunch service, lack of access to parts of the building and security concerns. The issue of security becomes particularly acute during a presidential primary, when voter turnout is much higher, and the reason for my letter today.

The upcoming April 19th presidential primary is an occasion when voter turnout is expected to be high and the District 6 area is known to have one of the highest turnouts in New York City. While police officers are assigned to schools to monitor voter fraud, I believe the real issue is security for the students and teachers within the school. Local elected officials and education leaders worked hard to have added police for UWS public schools during the September 2014 mayoral primary based on problems experienced by the schools in previous voting years. Voters were found wandering the hallways, peering into classrooms and using bathrooms. The Administration, teachers and parents of our local public schools continue to be highly concerned with the safety of the students this year while voting takes place. Given our school building set-ups, voters are often walking past classrooms and children's bathrooms to get to the voting location within a school, which is often the cafeteria. Once they vote, they can potentially wander through the hallways before exiting the building.

Elected officials and parent leaders within School District 3 have requested that the DOE make any primary voting day a non-attendance day for children to avoid any safety issues. The DOE has not yet

agreed to this change and so, in the meantime, sensible safety precautions are required. I am requesting extra security for each public school within my district for the April 19th primary vote.

Regularly assigned schools safety officers cannot be expected to safely handle the influx of people in the building. Their regular duties are still required for that day and they are not supposed to leave their post.

Assigning more officers to school polling sites is a common sense security measure and one the NYPD should assume for April 19th.

I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter for the safety of our children.

Sincerely,

Helen Rosenthal

Cc:

Ilene Altshul, Superintendent, School District 3 Superintendent
Joe Fiordaliso, President, School District 3 Community Education Council
Robert O'Brien, Principal PS 75
Novella Bailey, Principal MS 250
Monica Berry, Principal PS 87
Debra Mastriano, Principal PS 166
Louis Xerri, Principal PS 199
Jodi Hyde, PS 334
Scott Parker, PS 452
Henry Zymek, Principal MS 245
Evelyn Lolis, Principal PS 84
Caitlin Caldwell, Principal MS 247
Eric Shuffler, Co-Chair Community Board 7 Youth, Education and Libraries Committee
Blanche Lawton, Co-Chair Community Board 7 Youth, Education and Libraries Committee