



# Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

## INCREASE FUNDING TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ACCESSIBILITY IN NEW YORK CITY

Students with physical disabilities often have difficulty finding school buildings that they can access.

- » Less than 1 in 5 of the City's schools are fully accessible.
- » In 28 of the City's 32 school districts, less than one-third of the schools are fully accessible.
- » In seven districts, less than 10% of the schools are fully accessible.

Given the lack of fully accessible schools, the DOE relies on "partially accessible" schools to serve students with accessibility needs. However, these schools often are inaccessible in significant ways. Some of these schools have no working elevators. Others have cafeterias, science labs, bathrooms, libraries, and auditorium stages that can't accommodate people who use wheelchairs.

As a result, families have limited options when applying to school programs across grades. Students are often required to travel significant distances for school. Families are routinely forced to make difficult compromises regarding school curriculum and programming because their accessible school options are so limited.

Furthermore, in past years, when families have been matched with schools that could be made accessible through relatively minor renovations or accommodations, these renovations often have not happened in a timely way because funding was difficult, if not impossible, to arrange and obtain.

### CURRENT FUNDING

The FY 2015-2019 DOE Capital Plan originally allocated \$100 million for improving school accessibility. Last year, with the support of the Administration and the City Council, the City allocated an additional \$150 million — \$50 million per year for FY 2019, 2020 and 2021 — to improve school accessibility in NYC. Even with this addition, funding for school accessibility still represented **less than one percent** of the total funding in the FY 15-19 Capital Plan.

### FY 2020 BUDGET RECOMMENDATION

The proposed 5-year DOE Capital Plan (FY 2020-2024) includes **\$750 million** for school accessibility, **starting with \$150 million for FY 2020**. We recommend that the final Capital Plan include at least this funding level, which would represent the largest capital funding investment in school accessibility to date. The funding over the next 5 years will literally open doors to inclusion and integration for people too often excluded from school buildings and will set us on a path toward the longer-term goal of developing a fully accessible school system.

*For more information, please contact Maggie Moroff, Special Education Policy Coordinator at Advocates for Children of New York, at (212) 822-9523 or [mmoroff@afcnyc.org](mailto:mmoroff@afcnyc.org).*

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