



November 19, 2020

Greetings --

Mayor de Blasio [announced yesterday](#) that all New York City public school buildings would be closed for in-person learning starting today, because the 7-day rolling average COVID-19 positivity rate reached 3%.

I believe this decision was misguided and that our schools should be one of the last places to close, not the first. Of the over 140,000 tests that have been conducted in our public schools, 0.2% have come back positive for COVID-19. The uptick in COVID-19 cases is real but is largely due to people congregating at indoor events that violate social distancing guidelines.

While the Mayor characterized this announcement as temporary, he said that he didn't expect for school buildings to reopen until next month or beyond. This uncertainty is highly disconcerting for students, parents, and teachers. These decisions should be made with more thoughtfulness and clarity between the Governor and the Mayor. I have grown tired of their ongoing dueling press conferences, where they each use different data sets to determine incredibly important decisions like school closures. New Yorkers deserve more cooperation and clear communication from the Mayor and the Governor.

Literacy Resource

With our public schools now fully remote, many parents want to know ways to support their children academically. One of the best resources to help early and advanced readers stay on track is the [Haskins Global Literacy Hub](#). It's free and updated regularly.

Free Meals

All families and students can continue to go to any school building between 9:00am and 12:00pm on weekdays to pick up three free grab-and-go meals.

No identification or registration is necessary. Halal and kosher meals are available at some sites, which are listed at schools.nyc.gov/freemeals. From 3-5 pm, New Yorkers of all ages can pick up free meals at 260 Community Meals sites across the city. For a list of sites, please visit schools.nyc.gov/freemeals.

MTA Budget Crisis

At yesterday's Metropolitan Transportation Authority board meeting, [a doomsday scenario of devastating service cuts and layoffs was proposed because of COVID-19's impact on MTA revenue](#). If the MTA's proposed cuts are implemented, New Yorkers would see bus and subway service reduced by 40% and the MTA would lay-off almost 10,000 employees. This cannot happen and these cuts would cripple New York's recovery efforts.

That is why I have called for the legislature to go back to Albany and pass meaningful revenue raisers to save the MTA and for the US Senate to pass the HEROES Act. All of this must be done before the MTA board meeting in December when the board is set to meet and vote on these doomsday cuts.

Absentee Ballot Legislation

New York still has not completed counting all of the absentee ballots from the November 3rd election. When we do complete our count, we'll be the last state in the nation to complete counting ballots. We can change this by counting and canvassing absentees ballots as they are returned, rather than waiting a week or more to begin. This is the law in most other states and the legislature should change this before our next election. In August, I introduced [A.10940](#) with Senator Jessica Ramos to do just that.

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

New York State is providing \$328 million for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) which helps income-eligible families pay heating costs.



**NEWS FROM
ASSEMBLYMEMBER
ROBERT CARROLL**

*Regular benefit
applications are
now open.*

Contact Robert Carroll's Office for additional information:
Call 718-788-7221 or email CarrollR@nyassembly.gov

Emergency benefit applications open Jan. 4.

Visit access.nyc.gov/programs/home-energy-assistance-program-heap to learn more or apply.

Rapid Point of Contact COVID Testing Site:

Borough Park

4002 Fort Hamilton Parkway

Brooklyn, NY 11218

Monday – Sunday, 9 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Full List of COVID Testing Locations

Here: <https://www.nychealthandhospitals.org/kingscounty>

If you need assistance on these or any other matter, please call (718) 788-7221 or email carrollr@nyassembly.gov and I or a member of my staff will get back to you as soon as possible.

Bobby

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