



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John C. Liu

Children, parents and teachers rally to save their school from DOE closure

JOHN C. LIU June 15, 2023

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**CHILDREN, PARENTS AND TEACHERS RALLY TO SAVE THEIR SCHOOL FROM
DOE CLOSURE**

Flushing, NY – State Senator John Liu today joined with Queens parents, children and teachers of the Rainbow Child Development Center to demand that the DOE not close the desperately needed community pre-K that serves about 400 children throughout Queens.

Rainbow operates four pre-Ks in Queens in Flushing, Fresh Meadows, Long Island City and Little Neck. The schools primarily serve immigrant families with free bilingual pre-K in English and Chinese. Most of the children come from low-income families.

At the start of the pandemic, the DOE opened an investigation into Rainbow after a payment dispute between Rainbow and a handful of parents regarding the afterschool program. Since then, the school has operated with little communication from the DOE until this May when investigators suddenly recommended ceasing the city's relationship with Rainbow. This month, parents began receiving notices that their children would need to be enrolled in other schools they never applied to.

Rainbow appealed the findings within 10 days along with nearly 300 support letters from parents who stated they were never required to enroll in afterschool and that they want their children to continue attending Rainbow.

In addition, Rainbow is still owed \$2 million in outstanding payments from the city as it has remained in operation throughout the investigation period. The community rallied today to call on the DOE to keep this beloved community school open.

State Senator John Liu stated, “Hundreds of families rely on these schools. The DOE not only starved them of payments for two years, but now they're saying the school may be shut down entirely and families who have attended Rainbow for years are being pushed into other schools they never applied to. DOE's questionable and seemingly hasty decisions and its utter lack of due process is leaving Rainbow and the families it serves in a lurch. We're calling on the DOE to make good on its payments and ongoing contract so that families can continue to attend these beloved community schools.”

City Council Member Sandra Ung stated, “If the New York City Department of Education proceeds with terminating the Universal Pre-K program at Rainbow, over 200 families would be affected in my district alone. Rainbow is one of the few Universal Pre-K/3K programs that I am aware of that provides both full day English and Chinese language instruction to children. I am concerned that if DOE terminates the Universal Pre-K program at Rainbow, then many of these parents may be unable to find alternative programs in the district. I urge DOE to give due consideration to the impact that removing these programs would have on parents and students before coming to any final decision on eliminating programming.”

Chirstine Ye, Owner of Rainbow Child Development Center stated, “These accusations by the DOE are absolutely false and unfair, and we never even had a chance to respond before the DOE started telling parents they

couldn't come here anymore! We have been nothing but forthcoming with the DOE and have provided ample evidence that these claims are false. Telling parents to enroll elsewhere before we've even had a chance to respond is an injustice, and we are calling on the city to do the right thing and keep our school open!"

Mishal Patel, parent, stated, "The staff at Rainbow possesses an exceptional blend of professionalism, expertise, and genuine passion for early childhood education. They have played an instrumental role in my child's development, providing age-appropriate activities that promote learning, creativity, and socialization. I have witnessed firsthand how my child's language and communication skills have blossomed, thanks to the nurturing and educational programs."

Jessica Lin, parent, stated, "As a SEIT (special education itinerant teacher) with over 13 years of teaching experience at a variety of schools, I can honestly say that Rainbow Child Development Center is a very rare gem."

Anthony Sannazaro, parent, stated, "Rainbow has done nothing short of deliver an extraordinary environment for our children's development."

Andy Ho, parent, stated, "We are very fortunate to have enrolled both our kids into the pre-K 4 and the newer pre-K 3 program offered at Rainbow. Ms. Jackie- one of the teachers at Rainbow who has taught both my daughter and my son, is a very talented and nurturing teacher. She was very attentive to our child and helped them develop and grow. My daughter and son were both accepted to NYC's gifted and talented program and we strongly believe it was under Ms. Jackie's tutelage."

Atsuko Sasagawa, parent, stated, "Both of my children and myself have been extremely happy with the school for its wonderful quality of education, teachers, management, as well as the well-maintained, safe facility."

Aya Yamamoto, parent, stated, "The quality of the program and the dedication of the teachers at Rainbow have been incredibly beneficial for us."

Evelyn and Erwin Milord, parents, stated, "Rainbow Child Development Center really understood how to adapt my child: from the transition from home 24/7 to being in a completely new environment. The teachers and directors have been very communicative on Elliot's progress thus far, and it's been so wonderful to see him excited to go to school every day."

Felix Carayon, parent, stated "The education provided by Rainbow School has been exceptional, and I believe it has laid a solid foundation for her future academic endeavors."

Gustave and Dorothy Badie, parents, stated, “We love our Rainbow family and all staff members (management and teachers) are great professionals, very supportive and dedicated to providing the best education for our son.”

James Tai, parent, stated, “The curriculum at Rainbow CDC is truly nurturing. We have been amazed at how our children have thrived under the guidance of knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers. The diverse range of activities and learning opportunities provided has contributed immensely to their cognitive, social, and emotional growth. Our children have developed a love for learning, and confidence in the things they do thanks to the creative and engaging lessons that Rainbow CDC offers.”

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