

# THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

April 3, 2019

## N.Y.C. DEMOCRATIC CONFERENCE



Dear Colleagues,

In recent weeks much attention has been drawn by yet another round of admissions offers to our city's specialized high schools that have fallen well short of reflecting the diversity of our populace. Many have weighed in on the matter, including our Speaker, **Corey Johnson** in a Chalkbeat op-ed, and Public Advocate Jumaane Williams in the Daily News. The solutions they propose to increase diversity in our specialized high schools differ, but they agree on something many of us in the Council have been promoting for several years: expanding access to enriched educational programming like gifted and talented (G&T) to more students, especially in communities of color, is a necessary step to improving educational outcomes for black and brown students.

In 2015, the BLAC approved a motion to **administer the G&T test to all students** enrolled in Universal Pre-K programs. In 2016, thanks to the Council's advocacy around G&T, the DOE opened G&T **programs in several majority-minority school districts for the first time in decades.** In 2017, the Council passed my bill, Int. 1347, which requires DOE to distribute information regarding G&T programs,

the exam, and the application process to the parents of all children enrolled in DOE pre-K programs. Just last month, 18 of you signed onto a **letter to Chancellor Carranza** demanding more and better pathways be created for our black and brown students, and it is time we as a Council address the issue.

Many of us have different points of view on how best to increase school diversity, but I am confident we as a body are best positioned to address these concerns. Thanks to the leadership of our Speaker and **Education Chair Mark Treyger**, I look forward to getting to the bottom of these proposals in upcoming Education Committee hearings aimed at improving school diversity. In particular, I look forward to working alongside all of you to improve the educational programming we offer our students, especially black and brown students, to ensure they too are afforded every opportunity to succeed in school and in life.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.

### Brief History of Gifted Education

**1922:** Leta Stetter Hollingworth begins first gifted program in U.S. at NYC's P.S. 165.

**1957-8:** Soviet launch of Sputnik sparks passage of Nat'l Defense Education Act: first large-scale effort in gifted education by U.S. gov't

**1983:** *A Nation at Risk* reports America's brightest students failing to compete with int'l counterparts; outlines best practices for educating gifted students

**1988:** Congress passes Jacob Javits Gifted & Talented Students Education Act

**1993-2004:** Two additional federal reports highlight inadequate resources directed to gifted education and lack of opportunity for students of color

**2006:** NYC DOE requires all students to be tested for acceptance into G&T programs; limited to students who scored in top 5 percent on tests

**2012:** Testing requirements changed; results more heavily weighted for admittance to G&T programs