



OFFICE OF THE BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT
THE BRONX COUNTY BUILDING
851 GRAND CONCOURSE
BRONX, NEW YORK 10451

RUBEN DIAZ JR.
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

TEL. 718-590-3500
FAX. 718-590-3537
E-MAIL: rdiazjr@bronxbp.nyc.gov

October 12, 2018

Scott M. Stringer
New York City Comptroller
One Centre Street
New York, New York 10007

Dear Comptroller Stringer:

I write to urge your office's urgent action to update regulations that are preventing our students from having access to the full range of technology that should be available to them. Directive 10 currently prevents the use of New York City capital funding for tablets and small laptops—such as Apple iPads, Google Chromebooks, Samsung Galaxy Tablets and Amazon Kindles—in our public schools. This policy is a detriment to learning, and your office must change it expeditiously.

Tablet computers have become almost ubiquitous, and have potentially limitless potential to expand learning opportunities in our classrooms. However, New York City's public school students remain limited in their ability to take advantage of them because of the regulations laid out by your office's Directive 10, which prevents the use of capital funding to purchase them.

I recently issued a report, "Programming New York City Students for Success," which outlines concrete steps both the city and state can take to expand computer science education to all students. A copy of this report is enclosed. A key recommendation of my report is the need to continuously evaluate and revise computer science curriculum to ensure it is up-to-date and in tune with current technology trends. This focus on timeliness and innovation should extend to hardware, as well.

Additionally, my report calls for a universal computer science curriculum to be implemented in a manner that first creates avenues of access in areas where funding has historically been lacking.

Page 2

With low-cost, portable technology such as tablets we can provide access to the most students possible in the shortest amounts of time, and could certainly ensure that lower-income communities stand on equal footing when it comes to hardware availability.

Your office has expressed concerns about the lifespan of these devices as well as the potential loss of property as a reason for preventing their purchase for use in New York City public schools and leaving Directive 10 intact as is. However, both of these issues have easy remedies especially if we work with the companies that manufacture these devices to modify them for educational use and use the city's vast purchasing power to affect necessary changes.

This is New York City. We should be staying ahead of the curve and inspiring other cities to follow our lead—not catching up with those cities when their policies get ahead of ours. We cannot move forward, however, if we cannot even spend this money for this purpose in the first place. We should be doing everything we can to make our schools more conducive to learning, and to put technology in the hands of our students to allow for meaningful interaction at a classroom level.

Imagine if, for example, every public school student had the world's greatest literature right at their fingertips? Directive 10 stands in the way of that. The City's policy on this matter has been outdated for years. I encourage your office to act immediately to amend Directive 10 to allow for the purchase of up-to-date technology options in our public schools.

Let's put the devices that are most useful to our children directly into their hands in our classrooms.

Sincerely,



Ruben Diaz Jr.