

New York City Council

Memorandum in Support of Legislation

This memorandum is authored by the sponsor and explains the need for the legislation referenced below, in accordance with Rule 6.00(d) of the Rules of the Council.

Introduction Number:

Int. No. 0399-2024

Prime Sponsors:

By the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams), Shahana K. Hanif, Gale A. Brewer, James F. Gennaro, Lincoln Restler, Tiffany L. Cabán, Linda Lee, and Lynn C. Schulman

Bill Title:

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring the department of education to provide information requiring school compliance with the Americans with disabilities act.

Submitted by:

Public Advocate Williams

Justification:

According to a 2023 report by Advocates for Children of New York, less than one-third (31.1 percent) of schools in New York City are fully accessible.¹ This lack of accessibility limits families's school choices and can force them to travel, sometimes for long hours, to an accessible school. This contributes to absenteeism and hurts their education. Additionally, students generally are not provided busing to and from after-school programs, meaning that students with disabilities who require bus service to and from their school are unable to participate in these programs unless a parent or caregiver is able to provide transportation.

The lack of accessible schools does not just harm students. Schools are community centers in their neighborhoods. Without accessible schools, many community members are excluded from events that take place there. They cannot attend certain plays, housing resource fairs, or their child's presentations. Disabled New Yorkers cannot use the school as a refuge during extreme weather events, or work at the school as staff or as a teacher. The facts are clear: public education should be for everyone, but the majority of our schools were designed only for *some* New Yorkers.

¹ <https://advocatesforchildren.org/policy-resource/access-still-denied/>

Our city is required by law to provide equal access to public services, including public education. Intro 399 will give us the information we need to clearly identify which schools are not fully accessible by requiring the DOE to make an annual report on how indoor and outdoor facilities comply with the ADA. This bill will also give parents and students the transparency they need to make informed choices by making public the contact information of every school's ADA coordinator, the protocol for requesting an accommodation, and the information on the extent that schools have the capacity to accommodate students and employees with disabilities.