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PLACE NYC RELEASES GIFTED & TALENTED POSITION PAPER CALLING TO EXPAND G&T AND HALT BRILLIANT NYC ROLL OUT

New York, NY, November 29, 2021 — Parent Leaders for Accelerated Curriculum and Education (PLACE NYC) releases its position paper on NYC’s gifted and talented (G&T) programs, “**Expanding Gifted & Talented, Immediate Action Towards An Ideal Future**”. The paper makes recommendations for immediate actions over the next six months and best practice solutions for 2022-23 and beyond to expand and improve the existing G&T programs.

As Mayor de Blasio refused to engage parents prior to the announcement of Brilliant NYC, PLACE NYC instead consulted gifted education experts and surveyed over 440 existing and prospective G&T families. The purpose of our outreach was to gather community- and research-backed solutions to dramatically improve identification and service to academically gifted students particularly those from disadvantaged racial and other backgrounds that have been woefully under-identified in the current system. Further, we sought to accomplish this goal by expanding and improving our city’s most academically successful programs rather than eliminating them. Our recommendations focus on improving access and identification of academically gifted learners, irrespective of their background, and ensuring ALL accelerated learners are placed in an appropriate education service based on their needs.

Highlighted solutions include:

- Universal screening with opt out at age-appropriate, regular intervals
- Expanding the number of seats and borough wide programs to ensure all children have access to a G&T program within local distance
- Incorporate local norming best practices to ensure academically gifted kids from disadvantaged, ELL and Special Needs backgrounds are fully identified

(Please read [our position paper](#) for a full list of recommendations).

In addition, we demand that the DOE halt the rollout of Brilliant NYC and immediately reinstate G&T admissions for Fall 2023. Community Education Councils 2, 20 and 26 passed similar resolutions calling on the DOE to expand G&T programs. Based on parents’ comments in the Brilliant NYC Engagement events, the majority of attendants particularly in District 2, 3, 20 and

26 do not support Brilliant NYC. An overwhelming concern is that the plan will be rolled out without any evidence that it is a better replacement to serve academically gifted learners' needs.

The Brilliant NYC engagement sessions have been, as New York State Senator John Liu described, "Orwellian Theater" at best. Even worse, the DOE has done the opposite of openly engaging the community by either muting parents in sessions, or having a DOE representative lecture parents for questioning the efficacy of the Brilliant NYC model. Parent leaders are skeptical whether the DOE will accurately reflect parents' concerns in their rushed efforts to push through the program before Mayor de Blasio leaves office.

"To me, it felt like the sessions were very controlled and deliberately attempted to limit the opportunity for parents to provide the feedback they wanted to give. This was only engagement in the sense that parents and the DOE were on the same zoom; there was no real dialogue. There needs to be real engagement and real consideration of parents' input," said Lucas Liu, co-president of PLACE NYC and President of CEC3 who attended two Brilliant NYC sessions.

Vito LaBella, CEC20 member and PLACE NYC Co-Treasurer also agreed, *"How is this divide and conquer strategy of isolating parents in "Breakout Rooms," sincere engagement? It isn't."*

Instead of pushing disingenuous "engagement" with parents under this current administration, we look forward to a more fruitful relationship with Mayor-elect Eric Adams. Many of our recommendations align with the Mayor-elect's and Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.'s Gifted and Talented Education Task Force report. We are grateful that the Mayor-elect supports the need for strong gifted academic programs for accelerated learners. We hope the new administration will accept our recommendations and expand, not eliminate G&T.

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