



NEWS FROM SENATOR SIMCHA FELDER

Contact: Sheri Toiv
718-253-2015
stoiv@nysenate.gov

For Immediate Release
February 10, 2020

“How Did This Happen??” Felder Charges Corruption

In Albany today, at the Joint Legislative Public Hearing on the ‘20-’21 Executive Budget, Senator Simcha Felder (D-Brooklyn) slammed Mayor de Blasio’s inability to make good on years of promises to improve DOE’s provision of special education services, charging that unparalleled levels of mismanagement are likely the result of corruption in the system.

For 14 years, DOE has been out of compliance with the federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act, leaving parents of special education students locked in a constant battle to obtain necessary services mandated for their child’s education. “We don’t have a moment’s peace,” one mother recently shared. “We have come to accept the autism diagnosis and the developmental delays and challenging behaviors, but the struggles that come along with it are not so fair... Paying for this has become another burden in my home.”

“Years of combined efforts by the NYS Senate and Assembly led up to the Mayor’s 2014 Press Conference where he committed to finally help families of special needs students,” said the Senator. “Unfortunately, a short lived improvement was followed by years of decline.”

Documenting 6 years of unsuccessful outreach efforts to address a multitude of unlawful issues plaguing the special education system, including delinquent settlement decisions and reimbursements, re-litigation of settled cases and onerous paperwork and procedures that delay and obstruct necessary services, the Senator proposed that the solution might be found outside of Mayor de Blasio’s administration.

“Incompetence of *this* magnitude is not believable. Corruption is more likely what’s happening here,” accused the irate Senator. “I am asking you, Mr. Mayor,” offered the Senator, “to join me in requesting an independent monitor from DOI to conduct a thorough investigation as to why 10,000 special needs students are in crisis,” guaranteeing that a letter of request would be sent out immediately following the hearing.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX