

January 28, 2010

Ms. Helene Banks  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Brooklyn Heights Montessori School  
185 Court Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Dear Ms. Banks:

When the Board of Directors of the Brooklyn Heights Montessori School decided in December 2008 to end its long and mutually beneficial relationship with the highly acclaimed Little Room Program, the Board established a deadline that ultimately proved to be an insufficient amount of time to find a suitable location for the program.

BHMS originally discussed the possibility of transferring the Little Room to YAI's network of programs last spring. However, it was not until late October that YAI was seriously considered as a possible organization to operate the Little Room. This left YAI only a matter of weeks to locate a space, negotiate a lease and begin a build-out for a September, 2010 opening. YAI Chief Operating Officer Steve Freeman and his team worked tirelessly to accomplish these goals as quickly as possible, but unfortunately the only feasible location proved to be problematic. Specifically, the landlord of this space declined to include a clause within the lease allowing YAI to opt out should they not receive necessary government approvals for the opening of the Little Room. Without this clause, YAI was forced to request that the New York State Education Department (NYSED) depart from its standard protocol and provide a pre-approval of YAI's Little Room application. Our offices worked hard to obtain this pre-approval, but ultimately NYSED rejected the request.

While we are disappointed by NYSED's unwillingness to adapt to the circumstances of the Little Room program, this extraordinary request for pre-approval was only made due to challenges specific to this potential space. Given more time, YAI could conduct a wider search and locate a site and a landlord more amenable to the specific requirements of the Little Room. Given how close we are to finding a new home for the Little Room with YAI, an extension of BHMS' self-imposed termination date for the Little Room is the only possible way to save this exemplary program.

There are two possible options that we would like the Board of Directors to consider:

The first option is for BHMS to extend the termination date from August 2010 to August 2011 and operate the Little Room for the next school year. An additional year would provide YAI ample time to complete all of the necessary paperwork and to identify and properly prepare a new home for the Little Room, starting in September 2011.

The second option is for BHMS to allow YAI, beginning in September 2010, to operate the Little Room program in its current location within the BHMS complex. YAI would rent the space for one year as it looks to find a permanent location for the Little Room. This option would also permit YAI to complete the transfer application to NYSED more quickly and with fewer obstacles.

Although the Little Room has many dedicated advocates, at this point its fate rests in the hands of the Board of Directors of BHMS. We hope to have the opportunity to continue working with you to save this vital program.

Thank you for your consideration.


Sincerely,



Daniel Squadron  
State Senator  
25<sup>th</sup> District



Joan Millman  
Assembly Member  
52<sup>nd</sup> District



Steve Levin  
Council Member  
33<sup>rd</sup> District



Brad Lander  
Council Member  
39<sup>th</sup> District