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Department of Ed Computer Error Leaves Upper East Side Kindergartners Without School Placements

Standing in front of the former site of the PS 151 elementary school, Assembly Member Micah Z. Kellner and Council Member Jessica Lappin called upon the New York City Department of Education to respond to kindergarten placement problems for Upper East Side families zoned for that elementary school, which has been closed since 2000.

Parents called the Assembly Member and Council Member after they applied for kindergarten placement through the Department of Education lottery and received notification that their children received slots at PS 158 (Bayard Taylor School), only to later discover that these placements were erroneous. When the parents contacted the school, they were told that a computer error, which the Department of Education discovered in June, resulted in placement letters being sent out to a number of kindergartners for class spots that did not exist.

“The students in the PS 151 zone have been left in a uniquely problematic situation – an educational no-man’s-land, where they are zoned for a school that no longer exists – and it is the Department of Education’s duty to ensure that these families receive the same courtesy as parents who are fortunate enough to live in a less crowded area with a zoned school,” **Assembly Member Micah Z. Kellner** said. “The City has dropped the ball and the 2008-09 school year must be the last round of this ridiculous uncertainty; City Hall needs to concentrate on fixing this.”

“These children need a school. These children, like all New York City students, are entitled to a school, not a permanent lottery ticket. PS 151 closed nearly a decade ago. The DOE has had ample time to solve this problem,” **Council Member Jessica Lappin** said.

The Department of Education says they are looking into the matter and that the Office of Student Placement is acting as a liaison between parents and schools to find spots before the start of the school year. However, with mere weeks to go until the new school year, parents who have been pleading for a resolution since June, have been left in the dark about whether their young children will have a place to start school in September.

“It has been very frustrating to be left hanging by the Department of Education for the summer. We did all that was asked and now my child does not have a spot for kindergarten. Everyone knows there are more children in the City than ever before, so why hasn’t the City planned for our children?” said **Upper East Side resident and mother, Ms. Jennifer Sapienza**.

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