



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
INDEPENDENT BUDGET OFFICE

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An earlier version of this letter was uploaded as a training exercise to this link. This is the version released on 10/18/22. To link, please link [here](#).

October 18, 2022

Hon. Gale A. Brewer  
Council Member District 6  
563 Columbus Ave  
New York, NY 10024

Dear Council Member Brewer,

At your request, IBO has estimated the daily cost to keep playgrounds at 680 school buildings open during non-school hours to allow for public access. We estimate this would cost roughly \$67,000 per day for three hours each day after school and \$180,000 per day for each weekend day. This accounts for the cost of staffing the building with a custodian and excludes those playgrounds already participating in the city's Schoolyards to Playgrounds program that allows public access during non-school hours.

You can find more details about this estimate in the attached memo. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me at [georges@ibo.nyc.ny.us](mailto:georges@ibo.nyc.ny.us) or Sarita Subramanian, who coordinated the study, at [saritas@ibo.nyc.ny.us](mailto:saritas@ibo.nyc.ny.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "George V. Sweeting".

George V. Sweeting  
Acting Director

## Memorandum

Date: October 18, 2022

From: Sarita Subramanian and Taina Guarda

To: George Sweeting

Subject: Cost to Keep Playgrounds Open After School & On Weekend Days

At the request of Council Member Gale Brewer, IBO estimated the cost to keep outdoor yards open to the public after school on weekdays for three hours a day and for full eight-hour days on weekends for those schools that are not already participating in the city's Schoolyards to Playgrounds program. The Schoolyards to Playgrounds program is co-managed by the Department of Education, Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Trust for Public Land and allows public access to playgrounds during non-school hours. IBO estimates that the cost of keeping playgrounds at 680 school buildings open after school on a weekday would be about \$67,000 per day and on a weekend would be roughly \$180,000 per day.

There are 940 buildings that had outdoor yard(s) in the 2019-2020 school year, according to the [Report on Physical Education](#), released pursuant to Local Law 102 of 2015. (This information was not reported on for the 2020-2021 school year due to the pandemic.) Of these, 260 are participating in the Schoolyards to Playgrounds program, according to the program's most recent [dataset](#) on Open Data as of September 20, 2022. This leaves 680 buildings that have outdoor yards but are not part of the Schoolyards to Playgrounds program, and therefore are not open to the public during non-school hours. IBO assumes the cost to keep those playgrounds open on a weekend would be to pay a custodian for eight hours at \$33/hour (\$22/hour plus time and a half). For our estimate of the cost to keep these playgrounds open after school on weekdays, IBO assumes the custodian would work an additional three hours.

IBO looked at the breakdown by borough and found that about 76 percent of buildings with outdoor yards that are currently not open outside of school hours are located in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. This is roughly proportional to those boroughs' shares of all buildings. A breakdown by City Council district is also provided below.

### **School Buildings in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx Account for Three-Quarters of Those With Outdoor Yards That Are Currently Closed to the Public During Non-School Hours**

<b>Borough</b>	<b>Number of School Buildings With Outdoor Yards Closed During Non-School Hours</b>
Bronx	153
Brooklyn	200
Manhattan	125
Queens	166
Staten Island	36
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>680</b>

**School Buildings with Outdoor Yards Currently Closed to the Public on  
During Non-School Hours, by City Council District**

<b>City Council District</b>	<b>Number of School Buildings With Outdoor Yards Closed to the Public During Non-School Hours</b>
1	15
2	13
3	11
4	6
5	9
6	12
7	11
8	29
9	22
10	13
11	20
12	13
13	14
14	14
15	19
16	20
17	25
18	12
19	12
20	5
21	15
22	6
23	18
24	13
25	9
26	14
27	11
28	13
29	10
30	10
31	17
32	12
33	13
34	16

<b>City Council District</b>	<b>Number of School Buildings With Outdoor Yards Not Open on Weekends</b>
35	12
36	18
37	20
38	13
39	13
40	6
41	16
42	14
43	11
44	7
45	6
46	11
47	15
48	10
49	17
50	10
51	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>680</b>