

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION honoring the New York Institute for Special Education upon the occasion of celebrating its 185th Anniversary

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor the New York Institute for Special Education upon the occasion of celebrating its 185th Anniversary; and

WHEREAS, The New York Institute for the Blind was incorporated in 1831 by a group of social activists, including Samuel Wood, a Quaker philanthropist, Samuel Akerly, a physician and John Dennison Russ, a philanthropist and physician who determined to create opportunities for individuals who were blind; and

WHEREAS, A single row home in Lower Manhattan was the location of the first class for children who were blind in the United States when it opened its doors on March 15, 1832, 185 years ago; later, the school was moved to the corner of 9th Avenue and 34th Street; and

WHEREAS, In 1924, renamed the New York Institute for the Education of the Blind, the school was relocated to its present campus on Pelham Parkway in the Bronx; and

WHEREAS, In 1986, the Institute reaffirmed its mission of service to children by amending its charter to accept not only children with visual impairments, but also children with emotional/learning needs and preschool children with developmental disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Now known as the New York Institute for Special Education, the school offers programs to children ages 3 to 21 from the five boroughs of New York City, Long Island, Westchester and Upstate New York counties; and

WHEREAS, The school is situated on 17 acres of spacious, well cared for grounds with buildings for classrooms, dormitories, a gymnasium with a fitness room, indoor track and a swimming pool; there is also a bowling alley and other areas of both indoor and outdoor play; and

WHEREAS, The school supports four quality programs for 300 children annually who are blind or visually disabled, emotionally and learning disabled and preschoolers who are developmentally delayed; and

WHEREAS, Camp Wanaqua is one very unique program as the only summer camp in New York City for children who are blind or visually impaired; this is totally dependent on private support, providing children with classes, field trips and activities that focus on the development of critical life skills; and

WHEREAS, The Schermerhorn Program recognizes the schools commitment to 185 children who are blind or visually impaired; many of these children, who range in age from 5 to 21 years, have a mild secondary disability and need a specialized educational environment in order to be successful in school; and

WHEREAS, These students are provided a varied and challenging curriculum and placed in either the one day or five day residential program; the goal is to provide through small classes a high quality individualized experience to assist students in gaining independence; this is accomplished through adapted physical education, regents classes and exams, modern technology labs and instruction in the compensatory skills that are needed by these children to face the challenges of the global world; and

WHEREAS, The Van Cleve Program is a highly structured educational day and residential component that includes specialized services such as counseling for the students and their families; and

WHEREAS, These children have emotional or learning difficulties; the goal is to reduce the behavioral and learning deficits of students by

providing academic and social skills necessary to enter less restrictive programs; and

WHEREAS, The Readiness Program is a preschool that helps children who are developmentally disabled from ages 3 to 5; they have disabilities that include speech impairment, mild orthopedic impairment or a learning or emotional disability; and

WHEREAS, By providing special instruction, intensive therapies and early intervention, many are able to be mainstreamed or are placed in a least restricted environment when they reach the age of five; and

WHEREAS, The New York Institute for Special Education is operated by dedicated staff members and teachers led by the internationally recognized, caring, competent and compassionate Executive Director, Dr. Bernadette M. Kappen, Ph.D. and a Board of Trustees chaired by John Rhodes; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize the dedication of the teachers, staff, Executive Director and Board of Trustees for their persistence, dreams and commitment to securing the futures of the children served by the New York Institute for Special Education; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor the New York Institute for Special Education upon the occasion of celebrating its 185th Anniversary; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Dr. Bernadette M. Kappen, Ph.D., Executive Director, The New York Institute for Special Education.