



**class size matters**

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Leonie Haimson, Class Size Matters

October 24, 2008

Testimony on school siting before the NYC Council Education Committee and the Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses

People always say that there isn't room in the city for schools. Then why is there room for massive high rises, developments, office buildings, and stadiums? Surely, there would be room to educate our children if we cared enough as a city to provide it.

Indeed, parents have seen one opportunity after another, slip through our fingers because of inaction on the part of the city and the Department of Education. For example, with the help of AM Deborah Glick, downtown parents identified a building that the state wanted to sell on Morton St. that could have provided seats for hundreds if not thousands of middle school students.

Despite the fact that the Deputy Mayor Walcott claimed the city was interested in acquiring the property, the city never made a bid, or even wrote a letter to NY State to express any formal interest. Accordingly, the State has now withdrawn the proposed sale. Why didn't DOE pursue this option? We still have not gotten an answer.

PS 109 is another example; a larger former elementary school that is sitting empty on E. 97 St., that could provide seats for over 1,000 students. It was in the city's original five year capital plan, to be retrofitted into a high school. But more recently, the DOE has been trying to sell it for \$1 to be made into artist housing. Why? No idea.

The city is now trying to sell several units currently at Bellevue Hospital; adjacent to one of the most crowded school districts in the city. One or more of these properties could be retrofitted into schools.

At a minimum, every city- and state-owned building up for sale should be considered for possible renovation as a school, and a list of those made available online. No city- or state-owned building should be put up for sale, and no Request for Proposals should be solicited on such a building, without first consulting the district's Community Education Council, the Presidents Council and the local Community Board about the need for school seats in order to reduce class size and eliminate overcrowding in the district's public schools.

The possibility of acquiring or leasing parochial schools for school use should be more aggressively pursued. If Church guidelines restrict mandated school programs such as sex education, these classes can be provided outside school grounds. In most cases, these

schools could be rapidly leased at relatively low cost, and need little renovation to be made into public schools.

Governor's Island remains a prime potential location for schools. According to federal law, at least 20 acres of the Island must be reserved for educational uses. Numerous buildings that once held schools and classrooms are sitting vacant, with sports fields adjacent, just waiting to be used.

When Michael Bloomberg first ran for office, he pledged to place a major high school complex on Governor's Island. Here is the language dated October 17, 2001, from his campaign website:

***"We should build a major high school and university complex on Governors Island in partnership with one or more of our great private universities. The room is there for athletic facilities, laboratories, workshops, classrooms, etc. This would also free up many existing buildings in all boroughs for junior high school, elementary school and special education uses."***<sup>1</sup>

.Space in commercial, residential or office buildings could be easily leased and retrofitted into schools. This can be rapidly done. Indeed, the space for Millennium HS was leased and renovated into a school in downtown Manhattan in less than three months.

Another opportunity is NYC Housing authority has open land that they are trying to sell to developers; these are prime sites for schools.

Developers could be approached and asked for schools to be sited within their developments; but this administration has not done this. Instead, principals or parents are left to make these requests themselves. In one recent example, a new annex to a school, PS 43 in Far Rockaway, Queens was built by a civic-minded developer, Ron Hershco, free of charge, simply because the principal of a nearby school asked him to, and because he noticed that students were already attending schools in trailers.

"I figured that if I'm not going to do something, this whole place will be overwhelmed, because I'm bringing in 300 families," he said. "I make my living in the area, so at least I could do something for the community. There was no other way for me to give back."<sup>2</sup>

As a last resort, eminent domain should be exercised, especially when few other opportunities for schools are available. The city has often used its eminent domain authority to clear areas for private residential or commercial development, but rarely, if ever, has it used this authority to obtain space for schools. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved Jan. 2002 from <http://archive.technomania.com/mikeformayor/Issues/rebuildnyc.shtml>. At this point, only one small public school, the Harbor School, is scheduled to be located on the Island – in the fall of 2010. Meanwhile, Liggett Hall, a landmarked, a 450, 000 square feet building, will continue to sit vacant, that could provide thousands of new seats. Moreover, all three conceptual plans developed for the Island identify Liggett Hall as an educational facility. As it previously held classrooms, already has a huge gym on the top floor, and has numerous entrances and exits, it could easily be renovated into a large high school or a series of small schools

<sup>2</sup> NY Times, Builder's \$2.5 Million Gift to a Packed Rockaway School, September 18, 2005.



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Testimony of  
**DAWN PHILIP**  
of  
**NEW YORK LAWYERS FOR THE PUBLIC INTEREST**  
before the  
**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND MARITIME USES**  
Oversight Hearing on  
**Addressing School Overcrowding and the School Siting Process**  
October 24, 2008

My name is Dawn Philip and I am a staff attorney in the Environmental Justice and Community Development program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI). NYLPI is a nonprofit civil rights law firm formed in 1976 to address the unmet legal needs of New Yorkers. NYLPI represents community groups concerned with schools on contaminated sites all over New York City including the Bronx, Harlem, and Long Island City

I've just recently taken over NYLPI's contaminated school sites docket. Nonetheless, I thought it was important to come here today to ensure that policy measures related to these matters – measures that NYLPI has advocated for over the past couple of years – are raised here today for the record.

Given the limited space available, we are concerned that new schools and leased educational facilities will be sited on contaminated properties, as has been a trend (at the May meeting of the SCA, the last one NYLPI staff attended, three new schools were approved – each on contaminated land). Siting schools on contaminated properties is risky business, as exposure to toxic chemicals can lead to behavioral problems, learning disabilities and decreased I.Q. for children. It is essential that a robust schools siting process be in place, particularly for schools to be sited on contaminated land.

NYLPI has several suggestions for how the Council can improve the school siting process for schools that are proposed to be placed on contaminated properties.

- **The Environmental Protection, Health and Education Committees Should Hold a Joint Oversight Hearing to Assess the Department of Education's Ability to Adequately Maintain And Monitor Schools Sited on Contaminated Properties**

Unfortunately, the trend in school siting and brownfields redevelopment, both in New York City and around the country, is to leave contamination in place, as opposed to undertaking full source removal. Doing so means having to employ long term controls to ensure that future site occupants are not exposed to remaining contaminants. These controls – like soil caps, ventilation systems and groundwater barriers, for example – can and do fail. They require maintenance and monitoring for as long as a site remains a school to ensure their integrity and thus that a site will remain safe. Parents, students and community members and their elected representatives have a right to know for sure that the Department of Education has the expertise, staff resources and funding to ensure the integrity of controls on contaminated school sites. The Council should investigate the Department of Education’s maintenance and monitoring capabilities before approving any more plans to site schools on contaminated properties.

- **The Council Should Urge Mayor Bloomberg to Withdraw His Opposition to Passage of a Bill that Would Give the Council Oversight of Contaminated Leased Facilities**

To build a new school, state law requires the School Construction Authority (SCA) to submit a site plan to the local community board, gives the City Council an opportunity to review the site plan, and requires environmental review – all of which give communities notice and an opportunity to participate. The SCA argues that its leasing program is not subject to these requirements. Thus, even where there is known contamination, there may be insufficient environmental review of proposed lease sites, and no opportunity for the community and Council to weigh-in. According to the 2005-2009 Department of Education Five-Year Capital Plan, there are a total of 35 leased sites. There will likely be more in the next five-year plan. Almost certainly, some of these sites will be on contaminated properties.

The Council knows this issue well; it unanimously passed a resolution in support of legislation to amend the Public Authorities Law (PAL) to clarify expressly that leased facilities are subject to the same community participation and political and environmental review processes applied to new school construction. The legislation is supported by 30 organizations, all of which are listed in a footnote below.<sup>1</sup> The New York State

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<sup>1</sup> Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) • Bronx Committee for Toxic Free Schools • Bronx Health REACH • Center for Health, Environment & Justice (CHEJ) • Chinese Progressive Association • Class Size Matters • Concerned Residents Organization • Environmental Advocates of New York • Environmental Defense • Healthy Schools Network • Hillcrest Citizens for Neighborhood Preservation • Hillcrest Estates Civic Association • Institute for Health and the Environment at SUNY Albany • Institute for Urban Family Health • Make the Road by Walking • Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) • New York City Environmental Justice Alliance (NYCEJA) • New York Immigration Coalition • New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI) • New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV) • New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) • Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition • Nos Quedamos/We Stay • Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF) • Sierra Club • Sustainable South Bronx • United Federation of Teachers (UFT) • United Puerto Rican Organization of Sunset Park (UPROSE) • WE ACT for Environmental Justice • Wellness in the Schools.

Assembly passed a strong protective bill (A.8838, Nolan) for the past two years, but the Senate has failed to act in a meaningful way, largely because of intense Mayoral opposition to involving the City Council in toxic school siting decisions. The Mayor's opposition to a political check by the Council unjustifiably places children at risk.

The City claims that allowing the City Council to review the City's plans to address environmental contamination on leased school sites will introduce "politics" into the process and delay the opening of new schools. However, the City has offered no evidence of major slow downs of new school construction projects due to Council review. The current process for siting newly constructed schools is already expedient and heavily favors the Mayor and the SCA. When a site application is submitted to the City Council it triggers a statutory process whereby the Council has only 20 days to act. If the Council does not vote on a site application within those 20 days, it is deemed automatically approved. And, even where the Council would seek to disapprove of a site, it would require a super-majority vote (two-thirds) to do so – not an easy feat. In fact, two recent new school construction site applications, one for the severely contaminated Mott Haven Site in the South Bronx, and another for the contaminated Gateway Site in Queens, went through Council review, gained significantly stronger cleanups through the process, and in each case approval was slowed by less than one month. Concerns about minor delays are outweighed by the potential danger of long-term exposure of school children to toxic materials. Council review is essential to ensure that stronger cleanups can be sought in order to protect children's health.

The Mayor's plaNYC report states that "protecting the health of New Yorkers must be our primary concern" and that "for too long, communities have been left out of the process of reshaping their neighborhoods." But the Mayor's public proclamations and his opposition to this legislation appear to conflict. We urge the Council to express its disappointment with the Mayor's mixed messages and urge that he withdraw his opposition to this important legislation immediately.

- **The Council Should Refuse to Approve Schools on Contaminated Properties Unless Funding is Provided to Affected Communities for Technical Assistance Enabling Them to Meaningfully Participate in School Siting Processes**

Parents, students, teachers and community members (not to mention most lawyers and elected officials) are often ill-equipped to fully analyze highly technical environmental data and properly assess whether a proposed remedial scheme is sufficient to protect the health of children, the population most vulnerable to toxic chemicals. We believe that the City has an obligation to provide funds to allow communities to *meaningfully* participate in public processes. Funding for communities for independent technical assistance is not a novel idea. Indeed, technical assistance grants are available to provide communities with funds to "obtain independent technical assistance in interpreting environmental and health information generated and/or evaluated under the State Superfund Program or Brownfield Cleanup Program about an eligible site,"<sup>2</sup> though it is not always so easy to secure such funding.

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<sup>2</sup> See DER-14/ Technical Assistance Grants Guidebook, New York State Dept of Environmental

To supply affected communities with funds for independent expertise is justified even where merely to calm fears in environmentally-overburdened communities that are often justifiably wary. Yet, there is important additional value. NYLPI has witnessed oversights at contaminated school sites that might have placed children at risk had independent experts not drawn attention to them. At the Mott Haven Site, independent consultants who reviewed the City's cleanup plan noted, "Cancer-causing compounds will remain on the property in concentrations well above Recommended Soil Cleanup Objectives."<sup>3</sup> The experts went on to recommend removing those "hot spots," which, thankfully, the City agreed to do. At the Information Technology High School in Long Island City, initial air quality testing results used by City officials to assure parents that the air inside the school was safe had in fact employed instrumentality incapable of detecting levels of contamination that could be harmful to occupants. Only after this error was pointed out by an independent consultant did the City retest the air. In both instances, had independent experts not been available, these flaws would almost certainly have gone unnoticed and unresolved.

The utmost precaution must be taken when dealing with the risk of toxic exposure to children, especially children from already overburdened communities. As explained above, there is precedent in both policy and past practice which justifies funding independent consultants. This funding is critical to our clients – parents of children attending these schools, teachers and local community members. This expertise will benefit you as elected officials, the communities within your districts, and organizations like ours as we work collectively to ensure that the strongest possible cleanup plans are put in place before we place the City's children in schools on brownfields. We urge the Council to demand City funds for independent expertise each time the City proposes to site a school on a contaminated brownfield.

- **The Council Should Refuse to Approve Schools on Contaminated Properties Unless the Council Has an Opportunity to Review Maintenance and Monitoring Plans, Including an Assessment of the Plans' Viability and Cost, Before School Site Applications are Submitted by the Mayor/SCA**

As noted above, toxic school sites require long-term maintenance and monitoring. A plan for maintaining and monitoring a site is often called a Site Management Plan, or SMP. (The cleanup plan is generally called a Remedial Action Work Plan, or RAWP.) Across the board, experts will explain that a robust SMP is essential to ensuring a site's safety. Yet, current practice for new school construction projects on contaminated properties in New York City allow for public review of the RAWP, public review of the environmental impact statement, a public hearing and vote in the Council on each school site application and the commencement of construction, all *before* an SMP is produced.

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Conservation, DEC Program Policy, 27 Mar 2006; *see also* NYS ECL §27-1417 and §27-1316.

<sup>3</sup> Lenny Siegel (Center for Public Environmental Oversight) and Peter Strauss (P.M. Strauss & Associates), *Independent Review of the Cleanup of the Mott Haven Schools Complex* January 24, 2007.

This is the subject of litigation NYLPI has brought on behalf of the Bronx Committee for Toxic Free Schools against the City. An expert affidavit submitted by one of the Committee's consultants was critical of the very bare-bones maintenance and monitoring plan outline that the City submitted well past the date of any of the public review processes described above. The expert stated, "It is my professional judgment that the Mott Haven [site management plan] could and should have described the long-term monitoring program in greater detail, particularly because maintenance and monitoring of the selected remedy will necessarily affect public health of schoolchildren."

The Brownfields Cleanup statute requires SMPs to include not only detailed descriptions of how sites will be maintained and monitored, but analyses of the long-term costs of any plan and sufficient analyses to support conclusions within plans that effective implementation, maintenance, monitoring and enforcement of institutional and/or engineering controls can be reasonably expected.<sup>4</sup> If an assessment were to reveal that DOE is incapable of carrying out what has been proposed in an SMP, or if the SMP were to prove cost-prohibitive, this would force SCA to reconsider its cleanup plan. Perhaps the SCA would decide to remove more contamination, or even site the school at an alternate location. This essential precautionary planning, however, is precluded by current practice. This should be especially troubling to the City Council which is being pressured to approve contaminated school sites without having essential information provided upfront. The Council should insist upon the completion and submission of a draft SMP by SCA before it will approve schools on contaminated properties.

- **The Council Should Demand More Disclosure of Toxic School Sites by Passing Strong Public Disclosure Legislation**

The Council should start by demanding a list of locations from the School Construction Authority of all contaminated school properties, what maintenance and monitoring programs are put in place at those facilities and proof that there is currently no risk of exposure at those facilities.

The Council should pass legislation that would require the SCA to post the above-mentioned past information online, as well as to post all current and future plans to site schools on contaminated properties as soon as site applications for new school construction projects are created or proposals to lease contaminated existing facilities are initiated. For each site, where applicable, the proposed cleanup plan and SMP should be made available, as well as any monitoring reports required as they become available to the SCA. This legislation should also provide a mechanism by which parents can request air quality testing, within reason.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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<sup>4</sup> ECL 27-1415(7)



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New York City Council Oversight Hearing  
Addressing School Overcrowding  
October 24, 2008  
Testimony by Neal Tepel  
Assistant to the Executive Director  
District Council 1707 AFSCME

Reducing class size in New York City public schools cannot just wait until new schools can be built. There is an urgent need to find more space right now, and we want to commend the City Council Education Committee for holding this follow-up hearing on how to find additional classrooms.

It gives us an opportunity to point out that many of the Administration for Children's Services' day care centers have unused early childhood classrooms. The Department of Education could move public school Pre-Kindergarten classes into those centers and free up space that the schools could use to reduce class size and restore cluster rooms.

Over 120 ACS-funded day care centers have empty classrooms. The elimination of out of school time programs for school age students by the city has resulted in available space in many centers. In addition, there are now vacant classrooms due to forced downsizing and consolidation of pre-school programs by ACS.

There are two issues that must be addressed in planning for expanded utilization of non-profit facilities.

1. ACS is proposing to stop funding day care operations for their actual costs, starting next June. The city's pay for enrollment system will not provide adequate money to centers and some will close. This year, 261 of the 300 ACS centers have UPK classes. Many of these operations could expand absorbing UPK students from nearby overcrowded schools. However, if the ACS pay-for-enrollment plan goes through, many centers will be at risk of closing and additional space will not be available.
2. ACS centers have difficulties recruiting teachers for the UPK classes. Any plan for moving children from public schools to ACS centers must address the huge disparity of salaries between non-profit facilities and public schools. Our Union contract expired 18 months ago and the City administration has been stalling on negotiations for a new contract that would address the salary disparity.

The City Council needs to call for a moratorium on closing any ACS day care centers. With the building of new schools unlikely for several years and classroom space available in many centers throughout the five boroughs, the closing of these facilities is shortsighted. In the last four years, 16 day care centers have been closed or consolidated. These early childhood programs could have provided services for over 1000 children.





JONATHAN L. BING  
Member of Assembly  
73<sup>RD</sup> District

THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

CHAIR  
Subcommittee on  
Mitchell-Lama Housing

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Health  
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Judiciary  
Social Services  
Tourism, Arts & Sports Development

FOR THE RECORD

**Testimony to the New York City Council  
on School Overcrowding  
By Assembly Member Jonathan Bing  
October 24, 2008**

I am Assembly Member Jonathan Bing and I represent the 73rd Assembly District on Manhattan's Upper East Side and East Midtown. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today concerning school overcrowding. As a state representative for a portion of Community School District 2, I have experienced first-hand the effects of overcrowding on parents, students, and educators.

On the Upper East Side, which I represent, five of the seven schools are currently overcrowded<sup>1</sup>, including Manhattan's second most overcrowded school – PS 290, which is 238 students over capacity. This overcrowding situation leads to an increase in class sizes, the inability to accommodate individual children's learning needs, and an overall disruption in the education process.

This overcrowding situation issue requires immediate attention by the Department of Education and School Construction Authority in order to alleviate

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<sup>1</sup> PS 6, 158, 183, 198, 290

the existing overcrowding situation and to plan ahead for future growth. As the Department of Education and School Construction Authority will propose the five-year capital plan in November, these agencies must put forth a plan that creates enough new school seats to address school capacity issues, reduces individual class sizes, including meeting the state-mandated class sizes in grades K-3, and anticipates the need for school seats resulting from growth throughout New York City.

In order to reduce overcrowding, we must recognize the need to improve in the area of school siting, including finding and acquiring new sites for school construction, leasing space in existing buildings, and identifying City and State owned property that can be turned into a school facility. I believe that school siting will be instrumental in our ability to tackle the overcrowding problem and urge the City Council, Department of Education, and School Construction Authority to take it seriously. While we must look at rezoning, neighborhood planning, and other measures to reduce overcrowding, our ultimate success will be in the ability to build new schools.

On the East Side, I am proud that we will be receiving new school facilities as a result of the development at the former Con Ed Waterside plant and new construction on the site of PS 59. However, these new facilities result from agreements with private developers to build new schools, rather than the

Department of Education and School Construction Authority actively finding and acquiring new locations. I fully appreciate and welcome these new schools and recognize the difficulty of finding space to use in Manhattan, but I hope that the Department of Education and School Construction Authority understand that we cannot continue to rely on private developers as our primary source for new school space. For this reason, I urge the City to work with the community and elected officials to locate new space for educational facilities. Community Board 6 in Manhattan, for example, has proposed sites within its Community Board boundaries as future school space.

School overcrowding is an issue that deserves top priority. As communities throughout New York City prepare for significant population growth in the coming years, we must work towards providing quality education to every child in New York City by reducing class sizes, eliminating school overcrowding, and ensuring students can utilize cluster spaces. Further, we must improve our school siting process to create new schools and new classroom seats. As the City Council, Department of Education, School Construction Authority, and others review school overcrowding, I hope you will take school siting seriously.

The New York City Council  
City Hall  
New York, New York 10007

October 23, 2008

To the City Council, Mayor Bloomberg, and Chancellor Klein:

The PTA of PS89 would like to state our disappointment in the lack of concrete solutions to our impending overcrowding crises in Lower Manhattan. We feel the DOE has not yet seriously addressed the lack of seats for September 2009.

In his response to the initial DOE Blueprint for District 2, Executive Director for Intergovernmental Affairs, Terrence D. Tolbert, stated:

- "Action needs to be taken at some of the overcrowded sites before the new construction comes on-line. We agree that the situations at 89/289M, 234M, and 116M merit immediate attention and we just cannot wait for construction in the medium or long-term. We have to help students that are in school now... We have also already started to work on Fall 2009. .. At 89M and 234M, we are in the process of establishing options that will ensure viability for Fall 2009. "<sup>i</sup>
- "It is a DOE priority to allow students living in a zone to attend their zoned school. While we understand that overcrowding adversely affects students attending a school, turning zoned students away deprives them of the school entirely. Students have a right to attend their zoned schools and their parents have often invested significant time and money to find a residence in the zone."<sup>ii</sup>

Unfortunately, Mr. Tolbert is no longer available and his common sense and clear thinking on this matter are sorely missed by the parents of Lower Manhattan.

These are the DOE's facts:

- The latest Enrollment Capacity and Utilization Report show that the PS89 in Lower Manhattan is over capacity by 124%. These numbers are based upon 2006 registers and the numbers have only deteriorated since then.<sup>iii</sup>
- In latest amendment to the current Capital Plan, the New Capacity Summary states that while overall projections demonstrate a downward trend for City-wide enrollment, the data also shows growth in certain districts especially District 2. <sup>iv</sup>
- Based on the Grier Partnership study, the enrollment projections for District 2 are the second highest in New York City.<sup>v</sup>

These numbers are unreliable. The Superintendent of District 2 states that the impact of new construction is taken into account while calculating enrollment projections,<sup>vi</sup> however, that is not stated in the explanation of the methodology in the Enrollment Projections report<sup>vii</sup>. What is stated is that "one of the techniques worst shortcomings – a tendency to lag changes in trends. This can cause it to under-project, often quite seriously, in periods when enrollment trends turn upward..."<sup>viii</sup>. This is quite alarming since there is no larger, upward trend than the residential construction boom in Lower Manhattan.

- The Status of New Capacity in the current Capital Plan for District 2 has sited 3150 seats and 501 seats still to be sited. The total number of sited seats for Lower Manhattan is 1,582<sup>ix</sup>.

These numbers underestimate the extent of the Lower Manhattan overcrowding crisis. The City's Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual is intended to provide guidance for city agencies. The CEQR analysis examines potential impacts on public education.<sup>x</sup> Based on CEQR standards of 1 elementary school seat for every 10 new residential units, the potential need for new primary school seats in Lower Manhattan alone are 804<sup>xi</sup>. Compare that number with the DOE

estimated need for seats in all of District 2 of 501. Moreover, the scheduled opening of the Beekman School has been chronically delayed and the best estimate for opening is now 2011. The fact is there have been 143 new seats opened in Lower Manhattan during the last seven years of the current administration and only one new school scheduled to open in 2010.<sup>xii</sup>

With the release of the new five year capital plan, we hope the DOE will take into the consideration the findings in the September 5, report "Still Crowded Out", by Manhattan Borough President, Scott M. Stringer:

- **"Plan for growth**, by developing a clear, transparent procedure for projecting and estimating the amount and location of expected new housing development.
- **Plan at the neighborhood level**, rather than solely through the lens of overly large School Districts, in order to capture the pockets of significant growth and overcrowding that occurs in local neighborhoods.
- **Propose a much more aggressive five-year capital plan** this November than was adopted for the previous five years, with enough seats to relieve existing overcrowding, plan for future growth, and reduce class size."<sup>xiii</sup>

We currently have no options with the DOE. Time is running out. This is unacceptable to the families of Lower Manhattan. We need help to develop short and long term solutions to the overcrowding crisis in lower Manhattan. Whether it is long term school siting, new schools coming on line in the upcoming years or the immediate crisis for September 2009, we need some dialogue with the DOE because our children's futures are too important to leave to chance.

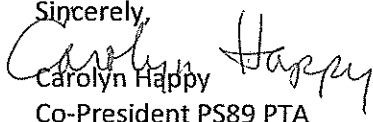
We do not want:

- Our youngest children to be bussed to other neighborhoods
- The only middle school in lower Manhattan moved to a smaller location and its amenities removed.
- the middle school moved to create a gigantic primary school
- Our youngest children sent to available space in a high school with no amenities or outdoor space.


We want and need space, preferably the Cove located in lower Battery Park City, so our schools can provide the education our children deserve.

We would like to thank the City Council, and all our elected officials including, Council Member Alan J. Gerson, Assemblyman Sheldon Silver, Assemblymember Deborah Glick, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, Democrat for State Senate Candidate Daniel Squadron, Community Board 1 Chairperson Julie Menin, UFT President Randi Weingarten and parents and educators at various other schools and organizations for listening and joining together to address this crisis.

Sincerely,

  
Carolyn Happy  
Co-President PS89 PTA

  
Anne Albright  
Co-Chair  
Overcrowding Committee

  
Sheila Schmidt  
Co-President PS89 PTA

  
Chrissie Schierlitz  
Co-Chair  
Overcrowding Committee

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<sup>i</sup> Page1, "Blueprint for District 2 Enrollment and Capacity", June 30, 2008, Terrence D. Tolbert

<sup>ii</sup> Page1, "Blueprint for District 2 Enrollment and Capacity", June 30, 2008, Terrence D. Tolbert

<sup>iii</sup> Page 3, 2006-2007 Enrollment, Capacity and Utilization Report, New York City Department of Education School Construction Authority, 2007

<sup>iv</sup> Page 3-4, Children First 2005-2009 Five-Year Capital Plan Proposed 2008 Amendment, NYC Department of Education, City of New York, Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor, Joel I. Klein, Chancellor, February 2008

<sup>v</sup> Page 25-26, Enrollment Projections 2007 to 2016, New York City Public Schools, Prepared for the New York City School Construction Authority by Eunice and George Grier, January 2008

<sup>vi</sup> Page1, "Blueprint for District 2 enrollment and capacity", May 16, 2008

<sup>vii</sup> Page 47, Enrollment Projections 2007 to 2016, New York City Public Schools, Prepared for the New York City School Construction Authority by Eunice and George Grier, January 2008, Appendix A

<sup>viii</sup> Page 48, Enrollment Projections 2007 to 2016, New York City Public Schools, Prepared for the New York City School Construction Authority by Eunice and George Grier, January 2008, Appendix A

<sup>ix</sup> Page 39, Children First 2005-2009 Five-Year Capital Plan Proposed 2008 Amendment, NYC Department of Education, City of New York, Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor, Joel I. Klein, Chancellor, February 2008

<sup>x</sup> Page 3C1, CEQR Technical Manual, Chapter 3c

<sup>xi</sup> Eric Greenleaf, Downtown's Growing School Age Population: Some Basic Facts, Prepared by P.S.234 Overcrowding Committee, June 12 2008

<sup>xii</sup> CR1, Children First 2005-2009 Five-Year Capital Plan Proposed 2008 Amendment, NYC Department of Education, City of New York, Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor, Joel I. Klein, Chancellor, February 2008

<sup>xiii</sup> Page2, Still Crowded Out, School Construction Fails to Keep Up With Manhattan Building Boom, Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer, Updated Analysis, September 2008

RECEIVED RECORD

**New York City Council  
Committee on Education  
and  
Subcommittee Landmarks, Public  
Siting & Maritime Uses**

**United Federation of Teachers  
Testimony**

**Richard Farkas  
UFT Middle School Vice President  
October 24, 2008**

Good morning. I'm Richard Farkas, Vice President of Junior High and Intermediate Schools for the United Federation of Teachers (UFT)

Thank you for convening a hearing on this crucial issue. It should come as no surprise to anyone that many of our classrooms are overcrowded and many of our schools are operating at over 100% capacity. It should also come as no surprise to anyone that overcrowded schools and congested classrooms diminish teacher efficacy and negatively affect student performance. We at the UFT believe alleviating this overcrowding should be a primary focus of the capital planning process and look forward to working with the city and the Department of Education in that regard.

For years, residential and mixed-use construction in New York City has thrived, and despite troubled economic times, we expect many projects to continue to move forward. It is important for the City Council, the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) and others who are intimately reviewing redevelopment and new construction plans to make sure that public schools are incorporated into those projects. It is in the best interest of the city that we not allow planners to allocate space exclusively to commercial and luxury residential construction.

When it comes to the siting of schools, the UFT recommends a collaborative approach between developers and the community, where working together, they can develop smart strategies and creative solutions to their unique situations. Some neighborhoods require new school construction, for example, while in other cases, we can convert existing publicly-owned buildings and add schools to residential properties in mixed-use developments.

An example that comes to mind is the building located at 75 Morton Street in Manhattan. The Empire State Economic Development Corporation issued a RFP seeking private developer proposals for the site. This state-owned office building was ideal for conversion to a public school, and the UFT, along with Community Board 2 and the Public School Parent Advocacy Committee got behind that idea because a new school could have helped relieve overcrowded middle schools in Greenwich Village. The Department of Education was on board and willing to direct the School Construction Authority (SCA) to help renovate this commercial property and

reduce middle school class sizes throughout District 2. Unfortunately, the low developer bids and the current financial crises have scuttled this project indefinitely.

We know that developers, the city and community can come together on this issue with great results. Long Island City developers correctly assessed the community's need for additional school space and included P.S. 78 on the first few floors of a 44-story tower residence, in District #30. P.S. 89 – I.S. 289 in Manhattan's Battery Park City provides another example of innovative land use. Initially the schools addressed overcrowding but with the residential boom that occurred in lower Manhattan between 2006 and now, both the elementary and middle school are again crammed and seeking relief.

Teachers and parents know all too well that overcrowded schools make it more difficult for kids to get the education they deserve. When classes are too large and schools are filled past their capacity, we place children at a severe disadvantage. We can ill afford to lose opportunities like the 75 Morton Street proposed renovation; and we must forecast growth more effectively to head off situations such as the Battery Park City example I gave where the city barely kept pace with its overcrowding reduction plans.

The UFT believes that the City Council can and should lead on this important issue. The Council can help drive accountability in development projects, ensuring that building plans help reduce school overcrowding, class sizes, and that the process is transparent giving parents, educators and the community a voice.

In any instance where there is a surge in commercial and luxury residential construction, the city must remember its responsibility to employ the same innovative techniques as an approach to abate overcrowding, and remain vigilant in securing the livelihood of our children and communities when approving future development plans.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY OF QUEENS BOROUGH PRESIDENT HELEN  
MARSHALL BEFORE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL - COMMITTEE  
ON EDUCATION, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24<sup>TH</sup>, 2008

GOOD MORNING MEMBERS OF THE NEW YORK  
CITY COUNCIL, EDUCATION COMMITTEE CHAIR  
ROBERT JACKSON, AND OTHER DISTINGUISHED  
GUESTS. I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE CITY  
COUNCIL FOR HOLDING THIS OVERSIGHT  
HEARING AND ALLOWING ME THE  
OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT  
PROVIDING THE BEST EDUCATION POSSIBLE  
FOR EVERY NEW YORK CITY CHILD. TODAY'S  
HEARING OFFERS US THE OPPORTUNITY TO  
SPEAK ABOUT A SPECIFIC ISSUE AS IT  
PERTAINS TO SCHOOL OVERCROWDING - - THE  
SCHOOL SITING PROCESS.

DURING MY TENURE AS QUEENS BOROUGH  
PRESIDENT, IT HAS BEEN MOST REWARDING  
FOR ME TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS LONG,  
COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT PROCESS. I AM VERY

HAPPY TO REPORT THAT THE CURRENT FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PLAN ALLOCATED 22,944 SEATS FOR QUEENS, AND TO DATE WE HAVE SITED 19,671 OF THOSE SEATS.

AS I MENTIONED EARLIER, THIS HAS NOT BEEN AN EASY PROCESS. THE DENSE POPULATION OF MANY QUEENS COMMUNITIES, THE LACK OF AVAILABALE SPACE, AND THE NUMEROUS REMEDIATION ISSUES THAT WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED, HAVE EACH POSED SERIOUS OBSTACLES ALONG THE WAY. DURING THE CREATION OF THE CAPTIAL PLAN, AS WELL AS THE YEARLY AMENDMENTS, I HELD BOROUGH WIDE HEARINGS BACK AT BOROUGH HALL, WHERE I HEARD DIRECTLY FROM THE STAKE HOLDERS THEMSELVES, PARENTS, PROFESSIONALS, AS WELL AS NUMEROUS ELECTED OFFICIALS. THEY OFFERED THEIR PERSONAL INSIGHTS AS TO WHERE WE NEEDED SCHOOLS, WHERE UNEXPECTED

POCKETS OF OVERCROWDING HAD EMERGED AND HAD TO BE ADDRESSED, AND WHERE NEW REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENTS AND CONSTRUCTION WAS TAKING PLACE IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS.

THERE ARE MANY STEPS THAT MUST BE FOLLOWED AFTER THE CAPITAL PLAN AND THE SUBSEQUENT AMENDMENTS ARE ADOPTED: (1) IDENTIFYING EACH POTENTIAL SCHOOL AND FINDING A POTENTIAL SCHOOL LOCATION: (2) CARRYING OUT MANDATED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDIES, (3) SITE ACQUISITION (SOMETIMES THE MOST DIFFICULT PART), (4) PUBLIC INPUT, (5) CITY COUNCIL RATIFICATION, (6) DESIGN, (7) THE SHOVEL IN THE GROUND AND FINAL OPENINGS. YOU MIGHT BE WONDERING HOW DID WE DO IT?.....WE FOLLOWED THE MONEY...

EVERY MONTH I HOST WHAT I LOVINGLY CALL THE "WAR ROOM." THE WAR ROOM CONSISTS OF MY EDUCATION SPECIALIST, MY PLANNER, MY EDUCATION LIAISON, THE PRESIDENT OF THE SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY, THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S OFFICE OF SCHOOL PORTFOLIO, ATTORNEYS, EXPERTS ON REAL ESTATE, AND NUMEROUS SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS. AFTER THE ADOPTION OF THE PLAN, WE CREATED A LONG SPREADSHEET (HOLD UP) ON WHICH POTENTIAL SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS WERE IDENTIFIED - - AND THE MOST DIFFICULT PROCESS OF SITING SCHOOLS WAS UNDERWAY. THERE IS NO SCIENTIFIC WAY TO SITE A SCHOOL, ONLY A LOT OF LEG WORK, SMART PEOPLE, AND OF COURSE - - - A LITTLE LUCK.

IN THE WAR ROOM, MONTH AFTER MONTH, ALTERNATIVES WERE PRESENTED, AND ISSUES AND IDEAS FROM SCHOOL LEADERSHIP WERE

SUGGESTED. THESE SUGGESTIONS WERE INVESTIGATED AND PROBED BY REAL-ESTATE BROKERS AND EXPERTS THAT WERE HIRED BY THE SCA. QUESTIONS WERE ASKED SUCH AS: WAS THE SITE LARGE ENOUGH? WHAT WAS THE PREVIOUS USE? DID IT NEED REMEDIATION? COULD IT MEET THE NEEDS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS? THERE WERE ALMOST 10,000 HIGH SCHOOL SEATS IN THE PLAN AND WE WANTED TO SITE EACH SEAT!!!! (WE HAVE SITED ALMOST 8,500).

AS THE MONTHS AND YEARS PROGRESSED THE SHEET STARTED TO FILL IN. EVERY MONTH PRESIDENT GREENBERGER WOULD UPDATE US ON WHETHER OR NOT THE SCA COULD GET INTO A BUILDING, AND WAS THE LANDLORD WILLING TO SELL? WAS THE COMMUNITY WELCOMING TO THEIR POTENTIAL NEW NEIGHBOR? DID THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION NEED MY HELP COMMUNICATING

WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY BOARD? THESE FREQUENT UPDATES AND QUESTIONS WERE ESSENTIAL IN THE OVERALL PROCESS OF THE PLAN.

MS. GREENBERGER, THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND I HAVE BEEN PARTNERS IN THIS PROCESS AND I AM PROUD TO SAY THAT WE HAVE SITED MOST PROJECTS IN THE 5 YEAR PLAN THAT IS CONCLUDING. AS THE SCHOOLS ARE COMPLETED, WE ARE PLEASED TO REPORT THAT EVERY SCHOOL IS UNIQUE. HAS IT BEEN EASY? NO....IT CERTAINLY HAS NOT BEEN!

I WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT SITING AND COMMON SENSE. THE RECENT OPENING OF PS 307 Q ON 100<sup>TH</sup> STREET IN CORONA WAS ESPECIALLY REPRESENTATIVE OF THIS COLLABORATION. PS 19 HAS LONG BEEN KNOWN AS THE MOST OVERCROWDED SCHOOL

IN NYC. ITS SCHOOLYARD WAS PACKED WITH TEMPORARY SCHOOL BUILDINGS AS WELL AS TRANSPORTABLE CLASSROOMS. THERE WAS MONEY IN THE CAPITAL PLAN FOR A NEW BUILDING BUT THE OVERCROWDED STREETS AND NEIGHBORHOODS WERE NOT SUITABLE FOR NEW SCHOOLS. A MEMBER OF THE WAR ROOM MENTIONED ONE DAY THAT THERE WAS A RUMOR THAT THE FACTORY OWNER ACROSS FROM PS19 WAS TRYING TO SELL HIS BUSINESS AS WELL AS THE FACTORY. THE SCA QUICKLY INVESTIGATED AND DETERMINED THAT IT WAS TRUE, AND THE PROCESS OF ACQUIRING THE PROPERTY SUBSEQUENTLY FOLLOWED. THE GROUND SOIL WAS RELATIVELY CLEAN, AND LOW AND BEHOLD..... PS 207 OPENED ITS DOORS IN SEPTEMBER 2007!!!

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLE THAT COMES TO MIND IS A FEW DAYS AGO, WHEN SHARON GREENBERGER AND I PRESIDED AT A RIBBON

CUTTING OF PS 303Q, AN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER LOCATED IN THE “OLD PS3” IN FOREST HILLS. THE SMILES AND EXCITEMENT ON THE CHILDREN’S FACES, AND THE HAPPINESS THAT THEY BRING TO THEIR PARENTS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS TO SEE AS BOROUGH PRESIDENT. THE IMAGES OF THE CHILDREN IS WHAT MAKES IT ALL WORTH IT!

I WANT TO THANK THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, ESPECIALLY SHARON AND LORRAINE GRILLO WHO HAVE MADE THIS PART OF MY JOB MOST REWARDING. WHEN I TOOK OFFICE IN 2002, OVERCROWDING WAS A PROBLEM IN MANY QUEENS SCHOOLS. AS THE EPI-CENTER OF IMMIGRATION, WE ARE STILL FACED WITH A RECORD NUMBER OF NEW FAMILIES, AND THERE ARE STILL POCKETS OF OVERCROWDING THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED. OUR WORK IS CERTAINLY NOT DONE, BUT TOGETHER WITH YOU – THE CITY

COUNCIL, AS WELL AS THE MAYOR'S OFFICE  
AND THE SCA, I FEEL WE CAN SUCCEED IN  
MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR CHILDREN.

THANK YOU...

10.24.08

My nombre es Lunorkys Veras soy madre de Cuatros niños que asisten a la escuela publica del Estado de New York. Richard mi hijo de 11 años esta en 5 grado Devon de 9 en 4 grado Kevin y Melissa en 2do grado.

Como madre he tenido que vivir y presenciar la dificil tarea que nosotros los padres de la comunidad de Highbrige ha tenido que pasar y enfrentar al no tener una escuela intermedia en nuestra area.

Represento tambien a 700 familia soy la presidenta de la asociacion de padre de la escuela P.S 11. Nosotros no creemos que sea justo para nuestro niño entre la edad de 9-11 años tener que salir de nuestra comunidad para poder asistir a una escuela intermedia.

En representacion de mi comunidad y de los niños de Highbrige pido que se construya una escuela y que se facilite todos los recursos para que nuestros niños asistan a una escuela intermedia en nuestra area.

Pedimos el apoyo de todas las personas que pueden hacer esto posible.

Gracias.  
Lunorkys Veras.

City Council Members,

At a time when our neighborhood is so rapidly changing for the better, it is more important than ever that we have a middle school to serve the kids in our community. If the city is going to invest so heavily--and optimistically--in infrastructure and businesses that will benefit Highbridge, it only stands to reason that it should invest similarly in schools. My family moved TO this neighborhood FROM suburban Connecticut, drawn by the convenient location, beautiful streets, affordable housing, and most importantly, good neighbors. I never cease to be amazed and moved by the energy, compassion, ambition and heart of the people I have come to know and care about in my neighborhood. Highbridge's families and kids deserve the same things any family in any neighborhood does. Our neighborhood is booming: housing is being built, older homes and buildings renovated, businesses established, parks replanted and rebuilt, even hundreds of new trees planted on our streets. Now is the time for the city to step forth and show that it isn't simply committed to beautifying our surroundings, but also to supporting the needs of the young people of Highbridge.

1175 Anderson Ave  
Apt 2AB

Janna Baty

Assistant Professor of Voice

Director, Undergraduate and Graduate Secondary Voice Lessons Program

Yale School of Music

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FROM THE DESK OF  
JOANNE E. SMITHERMAN

---

TO:

For our youth now and next  
our Community is growing, <sup>I've watched it grow for 50 years.</sup> growing,  
As I said before, an Education is  
the best thing we can give and  
do for our Children. To make  
them feel safe and Loved.  
Thank you, for reading this letter,  
our Community would gladly have  
anyone on the Council to Visit us.

Sincerely  
Joanne Smitherman  
Highbridge Gardens  
Residents Association President  
Community Activist (50 years)  
NYC Housing Authority City Wide Council  
Sec'y  
n.y.c. N. South Bronx Council of Presidents  
Presidents (34 developments)

## FOR THE RECORD

Hi,

I want to thank <sup>you.</sup> councilmember's for the opportunity to testify here today. My name is Layla Law-Gisiko. I am the concerned parent of children who attend PS116 in Murray Hill. PS116 is one of the most overcrowded schools in New York.

Last year, kindergarten classes had 28 children for one teacher. This year the situation has improved slightly, only because the school got rid of its Pre-K class. Still, the overcrowding problem is acute. The school population is so huge that everyday, my 5 year old child eats his lunch at the cafeteria at 10.45am. And 15 minutes is what he has to do it.

The DOE has based its study on school population based on information collected by the Department of City Planning. But this information is largely flawed. The process itself is largely flawed. The numerous spot zonings in downtown and Midtown Manhattan have generated thousands of new residential dwellings. But the impact of these has not been assessed properly. This strategy has allowed numerous conversions and the construction of several new buildings. But it has deprived us from the opportunity to get accurate information.

You are part of this rezoning process. You have an opportunity to ask that school space be adequate to educate the children who will live in these apartments.

Today, we know the truth. Our public schools are bursting at the seams.

The situation has been ongoing for many months and the DOE has been extremely unresponsive in addressing the issue. Their response went from denial, “NO, technically the school is not overcrowded”, to soft acknowledgement “Well, yes, there’s a problem, but we don’t really know what to do”.

Well, I am no DOE chancellor, but the solution is so simple, it is scary that they did not find it themselves: Create a new school for the children of the catchments is the solution.

Once again, DOE has been very unresponsive in identifying potential sites. For example, The School for Physical City, a public School in PS116 catchments zone was phased out of its facility. Instead of awarding the space to the local children, DOE chose to give the space to a charter school, privately run and for unzoned children.

Another example, The Belleview site would make an ideal location for a school. Similarly, far from being proactive, the DOE has been unresponsive in helping convert some of the space into a school.

In the meantime, it is our children’s education that’s being sacrificed. This failure to provide adequate class size to our children, in a city of this wealth is so profoundly wrong. It’s a generation of New-Yorkers whose education is at stake.

What I am recounting has been happening throughout School district 2 and 3 in Manhattan.

I just want to recount an anecdote: in 2004, when the Ladies Mile Historic District was proposed for rezoning, a rezoning by the way that you voted to approve unanimously on August 12 2004, without one question about its impact on schools, prior to your voting, I went down to the City Planning Commission's hearing and I raised the issue of school overcrowding. The City Planning Commission chaired by Amanda Burden did not even bother to address my concern. It was addressed by the attorney for the private applicant who requested the rezoning. The attorney told Chair Burden with a grin "People who buy milion dollar apartments don't send their children to public schools".

It is time our city agencies stop defaulting their responsibilities, hoping that parents will chip in 28.000 dollars per year and per kid for the education of their children. so that developers can go back to their business of building more towers without any accountability. Enough of the greed, enough of denial, enough of thinking that Manhattan should be populated by the super wealthy. Public service such as good education is a right. It should not be a privilege.

I am urging you to compel the Department of Education to create new schools and to create them in a timely manner, not when my kids are ready to go to college.

Thank you,

**School Siting Testimony - District 3**

My name is Jennifer Freeman, and I am the chair of the Community Education Council of District 3's subcommittee on overcrowding, AKA the Space Committee. We have been talking and meeting and researching the subject of school sites in our district for over a year, and I have learned a few things:

1. The Office of Student Enrollment, or OSEPO, says publicly that they do not plan for children until those children show up to register for seats in public schools.
2. Schools take about 8-9 years to build, generally, from the time they are planned until they are ready for occupancy.
3. If enrollment increases are caused by new construction, and if DOE has built into its model NOT to plan for kids living in most new construction until those kids are already in school, then it is difficult to take advantage of one of the best sources of new school sites--spaces within large multiuse developments.

In District 3 a few years ago, the developer Extell set aside space for a school in the buildings commonly known as the Trump buildings, a series of huge residential towers on Riverside Drive in the 70s. But the Department of Education turned down the site without explanation. Currently, Extell has set aside space for a 97,000 square foot school in its proposed development known as Riverside South, around 60th Street and West End Ave.

Although the DOE continues to state that a new school building is not currently needed in District 3, emphasis is on the word "currently." Officials have mentioned that when all the new developments are built, if the expected number of children indeed comes out of those buildings, a new school is likely to be required. In District 3 we do not want to find ourselves ten years from now hearing the DOE say that they cannot build a new school in the Southern end of the district because there is no suitable site. There is a highly suitable school site in District 3 right now, and a visible need for a new school on the horizon.

The Department of Education should plan responsibly and efficiently for future needs by building a school in Riverside South. A site like this is not likely to reappear when the DOE is ready to play catch up 5 or 10 years from now.

My name is Debra Freeman, and I am the Vice President of External Affairs for Lower Lab School (PS 77), an elementary school located in District 2 on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Lower Lab School's PTA.

We are glad that the DOE has acknowledged the overcrowding problem in District 2, and is committed to creating additional school capacity and exploring new sites for schools. However, we have concerns with DOE's methods for handling overcrowding and locating sites for new schools because these plans fail to relieve the overcrowding problem in elementary and middle schools on the Upper East Side where Lower Lab is located.

First, the DOE plans fail to sufficiently increase capacity on the Upper East Side. We need plans for new school construction on the Upper East Side now in view of our overcrowded classes which far exceed the DOE class size reduction plan targets and the huge increase in construction of large apartments for families. New schools downtown in the Financial District, West Village and Pier 40 will do nothing to relieve overcrowding on the Upper East Side. The DOE needs to actively explore locations on the Upper East Side where elementary and middle schools can be built to accommodate the increase of families on the Upper East Side staying in the city and sending their children to public elementary schools.

Second, the DOE plan lacks sufficient short and long term planning for increasing capacity to meet the demand for schools created by the huge increase in construction on the Upper East Side. The DOE's claim that rezoning will relieve overcrowding is inaccurate since with all schools exceeding capacity, no amount of rezoning is going to provide relief.

Third, the DOE plan is based on inaccurate data relating to overcrowding and capacity which cannot be relied upon for making plans relating to managing overcrowding. The DOE needs to obtain and review accurate up to date data with accurate projections for the number of school seats needed in both the present and future years when making its plans for increasing capacity on the Upper East Side. The DOE's description of schools which are under capacity is inaccurate. Similarly, the DOE's blaming of out of district students for overcrowding is inaccurate and disingenuous in light of DOE control of enrollment.

It is imperative that the DOE increase capacity through new construction and purchase or leasing of available real estate to be used as sites for new schools. The DOE must promptly explore all potential locations for elementary and middle schools on the Upper East Side, and work with local politicians to encourage developers to help build or finance new schools.

We ask that the DOE give serious consideration to Lower Lab's proposal for addressing the overcrowding situation at Lower Lab, PS 198 (an overcrowded school we share a building with), and middle schools on the Upper East Side as well as the need for additional gifted and talented programs in District 2. Lower Lab has proposed addressing all these problems together by making Lower Lab a K-8 school either by building up on

the current structure or moving the school to a new location. This would have a strong impact on relieving overcrowding at our school and throughout District 2 –leaving capacity to address the needs of children zoned for PS 151.

Thank you for considering our testimony.

**HIGHBRIDGE  
MIDDLE SCHOOL  
RALLY**

**4:45PM**

**167TH STREET** BETWEEN  
**UNIVERSITY & SEDGWICK AVENUES**

**MONDAY**

**OCTOBER 27TH**

**HIGHBRIDGE UNITED!  
MORE INFO: 212 203 1171**

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HISPANIC CAUCUS

SENIOR WHIP

October 16, 2007

Mr. Chauncy Young  
United Parents of Highbridge  
979 Ogden Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10452

Dear Mr. Young:

Thank you for inviting me to attend the Forum on Developing a Middle School for the Highbridge Community hosted by the United Parents of Highbridge.

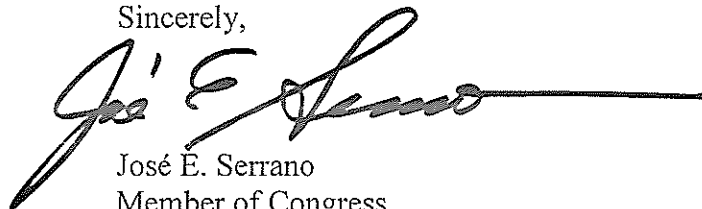
First and foremost, I would like to thank your organization for its dedication and commitment to the improvement of our community. I am thrilled that constituents from my community are so deeply involved in this issue of crucial importance to me.

Due to previous commitments in Washington, I am not able to attend the Forum. That being said, like you, I am very concerned about the lack of access to quality schools available to our children. It is an unfortunate reality that the many problems students in Highbridge face are prevalent throughout New York City.

I support you and United Parents of Highbridge in your important efforts to relieve overcrowding and secure safe and suitable school buildings for our children. I would, however, urge you to ensure that the site you select for the new middle school has adequate open space nearby. I believe that meaningful outdoor spaces, such as parks, ballfields and playgrounds, are essential to the proper development of children.

Once again, thank you for inviting me to the Forum. I look forward to hearing further from United Parents of Highbridge as it continues to work towards constructing a middle school in Highbridge.

Sincerely,



José E. Serrano  
Member of Congress

JES:kdd

# Roundabout route to class

## It's exhausting trip for children from Highbridge

BY TANYA L. SAMUELS

MATTHEW GARCIA gets up at 6 a.m. to ready himself for his hour-long commute — to middle school.

The 10-year-old Highbridge boy has to take three buses from his home on Anderson Ave. to Frederick Douglass Academy III on Third Ave.

"Matthew comes home super-tired," said his mother, Marisol Burgos, 33. "He comes home and goes to sleep. It's hard for him."

With no middle schools in Highbridge, students such as Matthew have complicated and lengthy commutes to school. Community organizers say enough is enough.

"It's an issue of safety. It's very clear there is an imbalance here," said Jesse Mojica, director of education and youth in Borough President Adolfo Carrion's office.

Highbridge is a rapidly growing community of 40,000 residents with five public elementary schools, one public elementary charter school and two private schools.

"The population is growing so much. We need a middle school," said Cynthina Williams of United Parents of Highbridge.

The city Department of Education sees things differently.

"We do not see a seat need in the neighborhood," said DOE spokeswoman Margie Feinberg. "There are plans for four new PS/IS schools in District 9, which includes Highbridge. Two already are in construction."

The new schools will create 1,890 seats in the district, she said.

But concerned parents said it will not help current middle schoolers who have to venture beyond the Grand Concourse and Cross Bronx Expressway to get to school.

"We have buildings coming up all over the place. The children will come with these families. With more children here, we need a school, no question," said Yolanda Romero, of the Highbridge Community Life Center.

With the DOE's next five-year capital plan on the horizon, community organizers said the time is right to push for a new program.

"Highbridge is a big community," said PS 11 P1A President Lunorkys Veras. "Why shouldn't we have a middle school?"

Community groups have already rallied support from local politicians, clergy and parent groups to push the DOE and the School Construction Authority to agree to a middle school.

"We don't want a situation to arise where — God forbid — a child is hurt or some tragedy happens before there's a response," Mojica said. "It's clear that there needs to be a middle school in Highbridge."

tsamuels@nydailynews.com



Highbridge middle-schooler Matthew Garcia, 10, has to take three buses to get to class at Frederick Douglass Academy III on Third Ave. "Matthew comes home super-tired," says his mom.

Photo by Enid Alvarez

November 11, 2007

HIGHBRIDGE

## A Muddle Over Middle School

By JENNIFER BLEYER

ON weekday mornings, Lluorkys Veras dresses her four children, takes them by the hand and walks them two blocks from their apartment to Public School 11 on Ogden Avenue in the Highbridge section of the Bronx. But Ms. Veras is dreading what school mornings will be like next year, when her oldest child, Richard, now a fourth grader, will have to travel on two buses to attend Junior High School 166.

Ms. Veras considers the trip of more than a mile, which will take her son across the Grand Concourse, both onerous and dangerous. Like other neighborhood parents, she is angry that Highbridge, with a population of 40,000, does not have its own middle school.

“Ninety percent of parents here are concerned about it, and the 1 percent who aren’t, it’s because they don’t realize until they get a letter saying their kids are transferred to the other side,” Ms. Veras said. “We’re a big community. Why shouldn’t we have a middle school here?”

There are five public elementary schools in Highbridge, serving about 4,000 students. The nearest middle schools are east of the Concourse and north of the Cross Bronx Expressway, requiring either a two-bus trip or a combined subway-and-bus trip.

Opening a middle school has long been discussed in Highbridge, but an organized effort has quickened in recent months. According to The Bronx Times Reporter, a weekly newspaper, a coalition called the United Parents of Highbridge is holding large meetings to promote a middle school, appealing to city education officials and gaining the support of parent associations, church leaders and others.

Margie Feinberg, a Department of Education spokeswoman, said that the School Construction Authority’s annual study of school capacity showed that only 81 percent of seats in public elementary and middle schools were filled in District 9, the school district that includes Highbridge, indicating no need for a new middle school.

“The capital plan is a fluid document that does get amended every year,” Ms. Feinberg said. “Things can change in a year or two, but as of now, we don’t see a need in Highbridge.”

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NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

JOEL I. KLEIN, *Chancellor*

Chancellor's Strategic Response Group  
52 Chambers Street, Room 215, New York, NY 10007

October 24, 2007

The Hon. Helen Diane Foster  
1377 Jerome Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10452

Dear The Hon. Foster:

Thank you for your letter to Chancellor Klein regarding the request for a Highbridge Middle School. The Chancellor has asked that I look into the matter and respond on his behalf.

I have been in touch with Lorraine Grillo of the School Construction Authority (SCA) on the issue. She informed me that the SCA conducts annual demographic and utilization studies to ascertain seat need for all communities. The latest studies prove that there is no seat need for a middle school in the Highbridge community, and that resources would be better allocated elsewhere. The SCA will continue to update the demographic and utilization records every year. If a seat need arises in the Highbridge community, appropriate action will be taken.

Thank you again for writing the Chancellor on this issue, and for your advocacy on behalf of the students of New York City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Friedman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter Friedman  
Chancellor's Strategic Response Group



**To:** Members, New York City Council  
**From:** Mary Silver, District 2 Parent  
**Date:** October 24, 2008  
**Re:** Hearing on School Overcrowding, Part 2: School Site Process

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My name is Mary Silver. I am a parent of a fourth-grader at PS116 in Midtown and two students at the New York City Lab School in Chelsea. I am also a member of Community Education Council District 2.

New York City public school parents are extremely grateful for the efforts of New York City Council members for their remarkable efforts in the area of school overcrowding, especially as demonstrated in their participation in the school overcrowding meetings this summer with the Department of Education. As a District 2 parent, I want to take the time to thank three council members, in particular, for their leadership: Councilmember Daniel Garodnick, Councilmember Rosie Mendez, and Councilmember Jessica Lapin. And I want to thank them for their position on the term-limits legislation, as well, because from the perspective of a public school parent, replacing one entrenched bureaucracy at the Department of Education with another, is not in the best interest of our public school children.

I want to bring to the Council's attention a document recently circulated by the New York City School Construction Authority. I will submit the document as part of this testimony.

The document is a Notice of Filing from the SCA to Manhattan Community Board 5 regarding the proposed site selection of a new school facility at the the southeast corner of West 17th Street, the New York Foundling Hospital. Attached to this same document is an "Alternate Site Analyses." This analyses provides a list of locations considered as potential sites for a school in District 2. The following four locations are listed:

- (1) 235 East 20th Street, the site of the NYC Police Academy;
- (2) 75 Morton Street;
- (3) 616 First Avenue (at 35th Street), the Con Edison site;
- (4) 160 Lexington Avenue at 31st Street, the site formerly occupied by Touro College.

Solow Development has committed to building a school at 31st and First Avenue; the Rudin Family is working with the SCA to take necessary steps to build a school at the Foundling Hospital site; and 75 Morton Street has captured the attention of public school parents and elected officials as a potentially viable school facility.

I bring these sites to your attention to point out that every one of these four sites was identified by public school parents working in conjunction with their local council members. I could name the parents that identified these sites. I have worked closely with each of them. They were not identified by the real estate firms on retainer with the

Department of Education to identify potential school sites. In the interest of expanding the list of potential school sites, I would like to know what sites these real estate firms have identified, if any. I would also like to know their process with respect to site identification. How do they go about identifying sites? I do not know of a single site in District 2, much less in Manhattan that they have identified. Please explain to me how average PTA parents can identify potentially viable school sites, but these respected real estate institutions cannot. What is wrong with this picture?

Additionally, I want to point out that in the same "Alternate Site Analyses," the SCA states that a preliminary review of the former Touro College building "indicated that it was too small for conversion to accommodate public school use."

The former Touro College building contains a seven story building with approximately 21,000 square feet. P.S. 116, the local elementary school, is a three and five story building (the SCA ran out of money to complete the top two floors of the building constructed in the 1960s) with 62,000 square feet. If PS116 with 62,000 square feet can accommodate 750 children, I submit that the Touro College building with 21,000 square feet could accommodate a small middle school with 250 children. I ask the Council to encourage the School Construction Authority to take another look at the Touro College site. District 2 is sorely in need of additional middle school seats as our elementary school population increases exponentially. The Touro College building was used as a school for a long time. And it should be used in the near future as a public middle school to relieve the overcrowded classrooms our middle school children experience everyday.

Again, I ask the Council to light a fire under the real estate firms on retainer with the DOE. New York City public school parents are resourceful, but we should support~~ing~~ the work of the SCA, not doing~~ing~~ their job for them.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important issue.

---

Mary Silver  
165 East 32nd Street, 10E  
NY, NY 10016  
(212) 689-3168  
silvermaryd@yahoo.com

NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL  
CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

October 6, 2008



Mr. David Siesko  
Chairperson  
Manhattan Community Board No. 5  
450 Seventh Avenue, Suite 2109  
New York, New York 10123

**Re: New, Approximately 560-Seat Primary School Facility, Manhattan  
Community School District No. 2**

Dear Mr. Siesko:

Pursuant to §1731 of the New York City School Construction Authority Act, notice is hereby given of the proposed site selection of Block 818, Lot 3 (portion), located in the Borough of Manhattan, for the development of a new, approximately 560-seat primary school facility in Community School District No. 2. The site consists of the first six floor floors (and cellar) of the building currently occupied by the New York Foundling Hospital at the southeast corner of West 17<sup>th</sup> Street and the Avenue of the Americas.

Section 1731.2 states that within thirty (30) days of this notice, a public hearing with sufficient public notice shall be held by each affected community board on any or all aspects of the Site Plan. You may request the attendance of representatives of the Authority or Department of Education at this hearing.

In addition, §1731.3 states that within forty-five (45) days of this notice, each affected community board shall prepare and submit to the Authority written comments on the Site Plan. Attached please find copies of the Notice of Filing, Site Plan, and the Alternate Sites Analyses for this proposed action. The Authority will accept public comments on this proposed Site Plan until November 20, 2008. All comments will be taken into consideration in the Authority's final decision regarding this matter.

If you require any additional information, please contact Ross J. Holden, Vice President and General Counsel, at (718) 472-8220.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sharon L. Greenberger'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sharon L. Greenberger  
President & CEO

c: Kathleen Grimm, Deputy Chancellor for Finance & Administration  
Wally Rubin, District Manager, Manhattan Community District No. 5

30 30 Thomson Avenue  
Long Island City, NY 11101-3045  
TEL: 718 472-8000  
FAX 718 472-8840  
Web Site: [www.nycsca.org](http://www.nycsca.org)

## NOTICE OF FILING

### NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

Pursuant to §1731 of the New York City School Construction Authority Act, notice has been filed for the proposed site selection of Block 818, Lot 3 (portion), in the Borough of Manhattan, for the development of a new, approximately 560-seat primary school facility in Community School District No. 2.

The proposed site contains an existing 14-story structure located at the southeast corner of West 17<sup>th</sup> Street and the Avenue of the Americas. The existing building is currently owned and occupied by community facility and office uses by the New York Foundling Hospital. Under the proposed project, on behalf of the New York City Department of Education, the New York City School Construction Authority would acquire a condominium interest in and would convert the cellar and lower six floors of the existing structure into a public primary school facility.

Site plans and a summary thereof for the proposed action are available at:

New York City School Construction Authority  
30-30 Thomson Avenue  
Long Island City, New York 11101

Attention: Ross J. Holden

Comments on the proposed actions are to be sent to the New York City School Construction Authority at the above address and will be accepted until November 20, 2008.

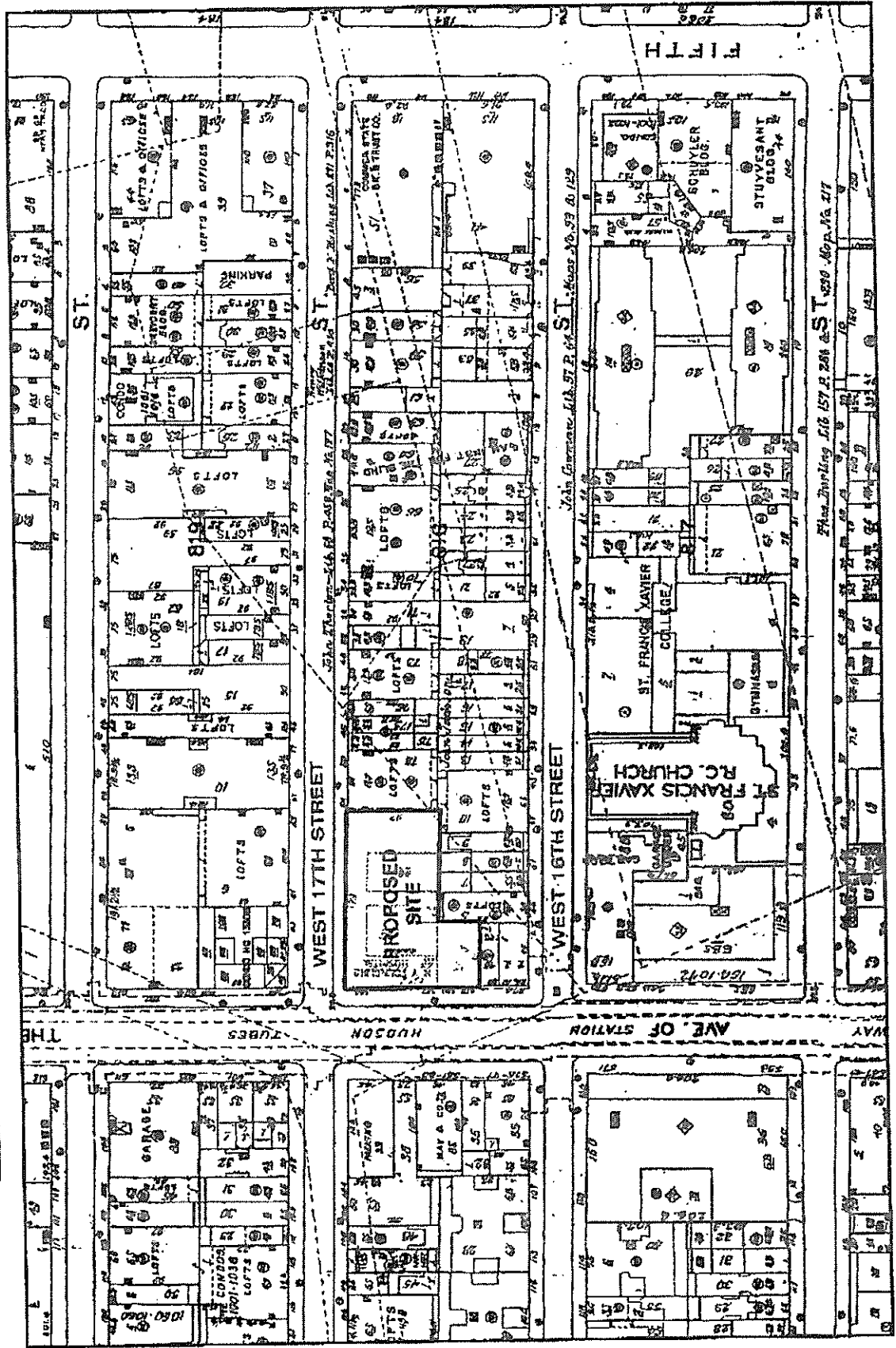
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For publication in the New York Post (5 Borough Edition) and the City Record on Monday, October 6, 2008.

**SITE PLAN FOR 560-SEAT PRIMARY SCHOOL FACILITY, MANHATTAN**  
 Manhattan Block 818, Lot 3 (portion)  
 Community School District No. 2



\$1731.100508-1126/09



## ALTERNATE SITE ANALYSES

### NEW, APPROXIMATELY 560-SEAT PRIMARY SCHOOL FACILITY 590 Avenue of the Americas, Block 818, Lot 3 (portion) School District 2, Manhattan

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The following locations were also considered as potential sites for a school in School District 2.

1. **235 East 20<sup>th</sup> Street (Block 901, Lot 6)** – This property is owned by the City of New York, and under the control of the New York City Police Department. The Police Department is proposing to relocate its Police Academy from this property to a new facility that would be constructed in College Point, Queens. The timeframe for the Police Academy's relocation has not been finalized, and the property is not currently available. However, the Department of Education has expressed interest in the property when it becomes available.
2. **75 Morton Street (Block 603, Lots 49 and 53)** – This property is owned by the State of New York and contains a seven-story building containing approximately 177,000 square feet and occupied by the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD). The Empire State Development Corporation requested bids for the property in June, 2008. A study was completed that confirmed that the building could be converted for public school use. However, the State subsequently withdrew the property from sale. OMRDD will continue to occupy the building, so it is not available for public school use.
3. **616 First Avenue (Block 967, Lot 1)** – This privately-owned property comprises the entire block bounded by First Avenue, East 35<sup>th</sup> Street, East 36<sup>th</sup> Street, and the FDR Drive Service Road. It was recently rezoned, and its developer has committed to inclusion of a new, approximately 630-seat public school facility on this site as part of the new development on the site.
4. **160 Lexington Avenue (Block 886, Lot 21)** – This privately-owned property has a lot area of approximately 3,100 square feet, and contains a seven-story building containing approximately 21,000 square feet that was formerly occupied by Touro College. The building is a New York City Landmark. A preliminary review of the building indicated that it was too small for conversion to accommodate public school use.



COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN  
3 WASHINGTON SQUARE VILLAGE  
NEW YORK, NY 10012-1899

[www.cb2manhattan.org](http://www.cb2manhattan.org)

P: 212-979-2272 F: 212-254-5102 E: [info@cb2manhattan.org](mailto:info@cb2manhattan.org)  
Greenwich Village • Little Italy • SoHo • NoHo • Hudson Square • Chinatown • Gansevoort Market

**Testimony from Keen Berger, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008.**

**I am Keen Berger, Chair of the Social Services and Education Committee of Community Board Two. Our neighborhood schools are all woefully overcrowded, our children are unhappy, our parents are furious.**

**We have held hearings and rallies, collected signatures and delivered petitions, attended meetings and strategy sessions, made phone calls and passed resolutions, including the one attached to my testimony, unanimously passed on August 13, 2008, which calls on all of you to “do whatever is necessary to ensure that 75 Morton Street become a new, fully-accessible middle school”.**

**As a community we have done all we can to get this site.**

**So I speak to you today as developmental psychologist, author of the best selling college textbook. I am here to remind you that early adolescence is a pivotal. Some children start toward drug addiction, early pregnancy, suicide, and school failure. Other children begin learning self-discipline, political engagement, and ethics.**

**This is a pivotal time. They learn from parents, peers, political leaders and schools.**

**What are we teaching them? Every middle school in School District Two, from the Battery to 96<sup>th</sup> Street, is overcrowded. Our community district has just one middle school, stuck on a fifth floor walkup, on top of an elementary school. Those adolescents have no gym, no cafeteria, no art or music rooms, no computer room ---- nothing except some good teachers and too many other adolescents in small space. If they want to hate the city and hate themselves, we give them a good reason to do so.**

**My message to you: If you care about children and families, give us a decent middle school. We found 75 Morton – it is ideal. We want you to buy or lease it now. We also found a dozen other sites --- no one can say there is no place for a middle school. You can only say, there is no place for a middle school child.**



COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN  
3 WASHINGTON SQUARE VILLAGE  
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**Resolution of Community Board Two, Passed unanimously  
August 13, 2008**

**Urgent Update regarding 75 Morton Street**

**Whereas** CB2 resolved unanimously on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008 that “the property at 75 Morton Street is ideally suited to become a school” to relieve the overcrowding in all of District 2, thus advancing the education of children of all ethnicities and abilities,

**And Whereas** hundreds of community members, disability activists, parents, educators, children, and political leaders rallied on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to express their determination that 75 Morton Street become a public middle school, and more than a thousand people have signed petitions to that effect,

**And Whereas** within the past month the Speaker of the City Council, our Borough President, our Assembly and Senate legislators, several leaders in the Department of Education and the Mayor’s office have publicly stated that 75 Morton Street should become a city school,

**And Whereas** New York State, specifically the Empire State Development Corporation, has initiated the sale of this property via a Request for Proposals due on August 13, 2008, with a decision projected on August 27<sup>th</sup>,

**Therefore Be It Resolved** that Community Board 2 expresses deep appreciation to Speaker Christine Quinn, Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott, Congressmembers Carolyn Maloney and Jerrald Nadler, Borough President Scott Stringer, Senator Tom Duane, and Assemblyperson Deborah Glick for their work to obtain 75 Morton for the children in our community and urges them to continue their efforts,

**And Therefore be it further resolved** that Community Board Two calls upon the Empire State Development Corp, the New York City Department of Education, Mayor Bloomberg and Governor Paterson to do whatever is necessary to ensure that 75 Morton Street become a new, fully-accessible, public middle school.

985 Woodycrest Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10452  
October 22, 2008

10/22/08 11:00:00

New York City Council  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Members of the New York City Council:

This letter is in support for the creation of a middle school in the neighborhood of Highbridge in the Bronx.

As you may know, middle school consists of grades 5 through 8. Because there is no middle school in this neighborhood, our children are forced to travel more than a mile to the nearest school that can be two bus rides away from their homes, and travel time can take as long as an hour one way. Most of the children have to travel alone because their parents may be working two and sometimes three jobs, and/or may be caring for younger children. This means that children as young as 10 years old are competing with high school students and adults for space on the buses that are always overcrowded. Some of the children have to leave home as early as 7 am in order to get to school on time. In the winter they are traveling in the dark at that hour; and if there are any after school activities, these children may be traveling home in the dark as well.

Middle school children should be able to go to school in their neighborhood. They are too young to have the burden of a stressful and potentially dangerous commute to go and come from school. The commute alone creates barriers to their receiving a quality education and to their being able to participate fully in the education system.

I have lived in Highbridge for over 40 years, and for quite some time we have been struggling to get a middle school. With all of the new housing bringing many new families into the neighborhood, the need is that much greater.

My fellow community members have worked tirelessly to identify potential sites for the middle school as well as petitioned all of the elected representatives, the Department of Education, and the School Construction Authority. The community has laid the ground work. All that is needed is the approval and support of the New York City Council.

Other neighborhoods have a local middle school. It is about time that Highbridge has one as well.

Sincerely,

*Anita Antonetty*

Anita Antonetty

985 Woodycrest Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10452  
October 22, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New York City Council  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

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Sincerely,

*Anita Antonetty*

Anita Antonetty

## Middle School Statement

Ocyntia Williams, Parent Leader with United Parents of Highbrige

1008 Summit Avenue, #B – Bronx, NY 10452 \* 347-231-7177 – ocyntiawill@gmail.com

Hello,

My name is Ocythia Williams. I'm a parent leader with the United Parents of Highbridge at Highbridge Community Life Center. I am the mother of six children, all who were reared and attended schools in the Highbridge Community until moving on to middle school.

I am unable to attend today's hearing, but I wanted to send a written statement for our representatives to read: It is very clear and simple. I would like for all of you to answer the following questions:

1. Would you want your 9 – 10 year old traveling on 2 buses and sometimes a train to attend middle school?
2. Would you want your 9 – 10 years old traveling on buses and trains to get to school unsupervised with much older students and adults (some who may prey on your child's vulnerability)?
3. Would you want your young children to travel to and from school across one of the most dangerous streets (the Grand Concourse) in the city?
4. Would you want your young children leaving and returning home alone in the dark to attend school every day?
5. Would you want your child to attend a middle school where it takes up most of their time to travel to and from school therefore limiting the amount of time for homework and sleep or any other family responsibilities they may have?
6. Would you want your young child to be stressed out because they're afraid to travel such a long distance to get to school which directly affects their performance in class?

If your answer to these questions are no, and I strongly suspect they are, please ensure that plans for a middle school in the Highbridge section of the Bronx is included in your Capital Plan. Our children have suffered and been in danger for far too long. Thank you.

October 24, 2008

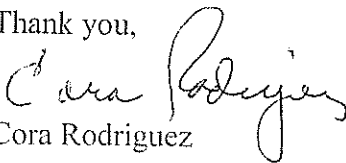
To Whom It May Concern:

I Cora Rodriguez residing at 1180 Anderson Avenue Bronx , NY located at Highbridge Community. I had a grandchild who attended a Middle School at CES 166 which is located crosstown from where she lived.

I'm a concern grandparent who worried about the long commute for a child to do everyday. She had to take 2 buses to get to her destination.

I would be very happy if they would build another middle school at Highbridge Community so children don't have to travel.

Thank you,

  
Cora Rodriguez

City Council  
City Hall  
New York NY 10007

October 23, 2008

Re: School Siting

Members of the Council, Dept. of Education, Mayor Bloomberg:

When I first moved to Tribeca 18 years ago I listened to stories of the parents who had pushed for a new school to be built two years earlier, in 1988 on Greenwich St.. They told of how they had to fight tooth and nail to get the school built. The Department of Education had told them how unnecessary it was, and expensive... 18 years later, this public school, that was built against all odds, is now the most sought after public school in Manhattan. The only problem is that it now houses over 200 more students than it was intended to when it was built. A school that has drawn 10,000 residents over 7 years, post 9/11 to spend an average of 2 million on an apartment just to be able to attend this school.

I realize that the theme of this hearing is school siting, and tell my little short story first, as one cannot discuss school siting without first talking of the process of acknowledging that there is in fact a need for a new school, and then once that need has been confirmed, the speed and efficiency in which the school is sited, leased, built and then occupied, They walk hand in hand.

This administration clearly knew, five years ago, that these as-of-right buildings were approved for construction. They knew the buildings were prominently 2 bedrooms and up, making it obvious that families were the target of the development. Yet not one move was made towards creating any infrastructure, despite Mayor Bloomberg's insistence that he was going to "revitalize downtown" including new homes, schools and other infrastructure. When confronted as the buildings went up without mention of the said schools, our pleas were met with complacency, even condescension. Why would they do this? Isn't in their best interest and not to mention their job, to provide schools as neighborhoods develop? After all, 10,000 new homes equals billions, in real estate, income, mansion and estate taxes a year; let alone all of the attending consumption of these new residents. Why would they not act?

This question must be answered before we can talk about why the City cannot seem to site schools in an expedient manner. A representative from the DOE came to a recent task force meeting and without notice, and said that a space that they had been pushing on the community for 5 months, 26 Broadway, was off the table. The department of buildings had deemed it unviable for early elementary use. The rep then shrugged her shoulders and said that the real estate people that the DOE employs cannot find any other space that would be viable for this incubation space, and asked the parents for suggestions! They spent 5 months pursuing the property before finding out it was unviable? I left the meeting stunned, phoned a commercial broker, and in 60 seconds he had told me of over 15 spaces that were available in the area I asked about.

The siting problem, is that no one is actually looking for space! At the overcrowding hearing at City Hall two weeks ago, we listened to Kathleen Grimm tell us how 3000 and some seats had

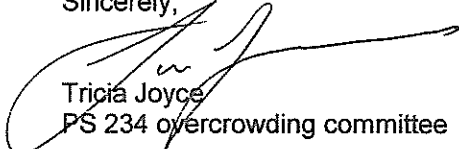
been "added" downtown. Well what she apparently meant was that they had been planned for sometime in the future, even though they were included, and funded, in this 5 year Capital plan.. The reality is that 143 seats have children sitting in them. 143. 350 seats at the Beekman school won't be finished until 2011, and @ another 900 seats at PS 276 won't be finished until 2010, if we are lucky. And another 1500 hadn't even been sited! Added, but not sited... This leaves us another 800 seats short, even when these schools are completed. By the time they have finally addressed the elementary disaster, we will have a middle school disaster. If the seats aren't here in time the families will leave. Had they acted on it even two years before they did we would not be in this tragic situation.

The solution to proper school siting therefore in my view is;

1. **Plan** School planning needs to be years in advance, when the permits for construction are signed. The city will then have the joy of having a lot more real estate to choose from, and not be forced to pay for expensive short term band aid solutions, but invest in whole buildings, that, with thought and planning, can be used now and down the road for a multitude of uses if the landscape changes.
2. The **land use zoning** needs a total overhaul. There simply cannot be an area as dense as downtown that is almost exclusively as of right zoning. If the city wants the developers to shoulder the responsibility of housing schools, then they need to zone the land as such. To expect community boards and parents to fight for what is rightly theirs one project at a time is ludicrous, and disrespectful.
3. **Listen** to the communities. We are your soldiers, we are 'on the ground and in the schools". Use our experience and work with us. Communicate, negotiate. Make decisions that support our communities. We, and the teachers, are who make schools great, not the DOE. If the DOE wants to have a city where people are eager to any school in their district, not just the "choice" schools Ms Grimm mentioned, give them support so that not only the wealthy schools where the parents give hundreds of thousands of dollars a year and endless time and resources are great.
4. **Zone for communities, not districts.** It will never work to try and bus half a family somewhere 30 minutes away to a school that is completely foreign to us and our children, just because it has 20 more seats. Zoning for communities helps the city plan more efficiently. Where there is building, there are schools.

In the past two weeks, at the invitation of that member of the DOE, we have found 6 viable spaces below Canal St with minimal effort. The problem is that we should not be the ones doing it. And now we have to go through the grueling process of trying to sell it. Just as they did with PS 234, 18 years ago. Let's hope that this time, they have learned the lesson of past mistakes and change the way once and for all the way schools are sited, and built in New York, before we lose the families, our greatest resource.

Sincerely,



Tricia Joyce  
PS 234 overcrowding committee

FOR THE RECORD

Bakari Camara  
1329 Plimpton Avenue  
Bronx NY 10452

October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Honorable Members of the New York City Council,

My name is Bakari Camara and my family and I have lived on Plimpton Avenue in the Highbridge Neighborhood of the Bronx since 1992. I am a father of six children: four girls, one of whom is in nursery school, two in elementary school and my oldest has just entered high school and two boys, both of whom are in middle school, but not in the Bronx but in a boarding school in my native country of Gambia. It was never my family's plan to send my sons back to Africa to attend middle school, but the situation that we faced in Highbridge and in my family made this the only viable option and my story is not unlike many families' stories in the neighborhood of Highbridge.

The zoned public school for our family is PS 11, the Highbridge School, and is pre-K thru 4<sup>th</sup> Grade – thus when my children were between 9 & 10 years of age they would have to travel on two public buses to get to the nearest middle school – either across the Grand Concourse or on the other side of the Cross Bronx Expressway. This to me and my family was an unacceptable option and thus we choose the only available alternative: my children, though like the rest of my family, devout Muslims, would attend Sacred Heart School, a catholic school in the neighborhood which was a Pre-K thru 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Institution. Thus every day, my children recited catholic prayers and every week my children attended Sacred Heart Church as part of their education because our family needed a safe environment in which they could learn. I want to make it clear that our family loved Sacred Heart School and we did not want our children to leave it, but the truth is we did not feel that we had any other choice.

First my oldest daughter was student at Sacred Heart, then my oldest son joined her and finally the youngest son became a student. Suddenly, with increases in tuition and children in Sacred Heart, our family could no longer afford to continue. Hawa, my oldest daughter was entering 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, and my sons were in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade – we had more fears about the boys getting in trouble, then my daughter so while we continued to pay for the boys to attend Sacred Heart, my brother and I shared the burden of driving my daughter back and forth to her new middle school, Bronx Preparatory Academy on 172<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. After a year of the keeping the boys in Sacred Heart, it became clear that we could not afford to continue even with both my wife and I working fulltime. Thus, faced with the prospect of sending the boys to distant schools and chance them getting mixed up with gangs or drugs, my wife and I decided to send them to Gambian where they could attend a protected boarding school. This was over two years ago, when my sons would be soon turning eight & ten years old, Yousive, is now twelve and his youngest brother, Omaru, is ten and we hope when the boys reach high school they will be able to study again the Bronx.

Life for my daughter has not be easy either, for both her fifth and sixth grade years, my brother and I drove her to school, fearing what might happen to her otherwise. But then tragedy struck our family as

my brother suddenly got sick and died. We adopted my brother's daughter, Fatoumata, who is currently in elementary school at PS 11, but I was unable to take my oldest daughter back and forth to school. This is how Hawa at age twelve began to commute daily to school, which was very difficult for our family, but certainly better than at 9 or ten years old. My daughter is now fourteen years old and is a freshman in Bronx Latin High School and normally it takes her about an hour to get to school.

In conclusion, I would like to state that Highbridge has five elementary schools and yet no middle or high schools, this neighborhood and the families that call it home deserve better: Highbridge needs a Middle School. Thank You.

FOR THE RECORD

Good Morning Everyone

My name is Ms Smith iam a PTA Pres <sup>Grandmother-3</sup> + Parent of Student <sup>in middle school</sup>

My Wish is For Some Relief for all my

Children that have to travel So Far. This year

just to get to School. We are always wondering

if they got safely to school or will they get home  
without anything happening to them along the way

Our kids go through some dangerous neighborhoods  
just to get to school. They must return home after

enduring a lot of early traveling in their early years.

We parents understand the plans are still in the works.

For a middle school in Hightbridge. All i can say

is "What is taking so long?"

10-24-08

To whom this may concern,

My name is Gloria LaMont  
I am a Twenty Six year Resident of  
Highbridge here in the Bronx.

I am the Mother of six girls,  
whom all attended elementary school  
here in highbridge. it was fine in terms  
of assessibility, but when it came time for  
middle school it was a complete disaster.

my Children had to walk uphill  
through parks and cross the Grand Concourse  
which is a big two way street with four lanes.  
these are children who I took to school  
everyday, who now had to go cross town  
by them ~~se~~ self. Clearly too dangouse for  
ten, and twelve year olds children.

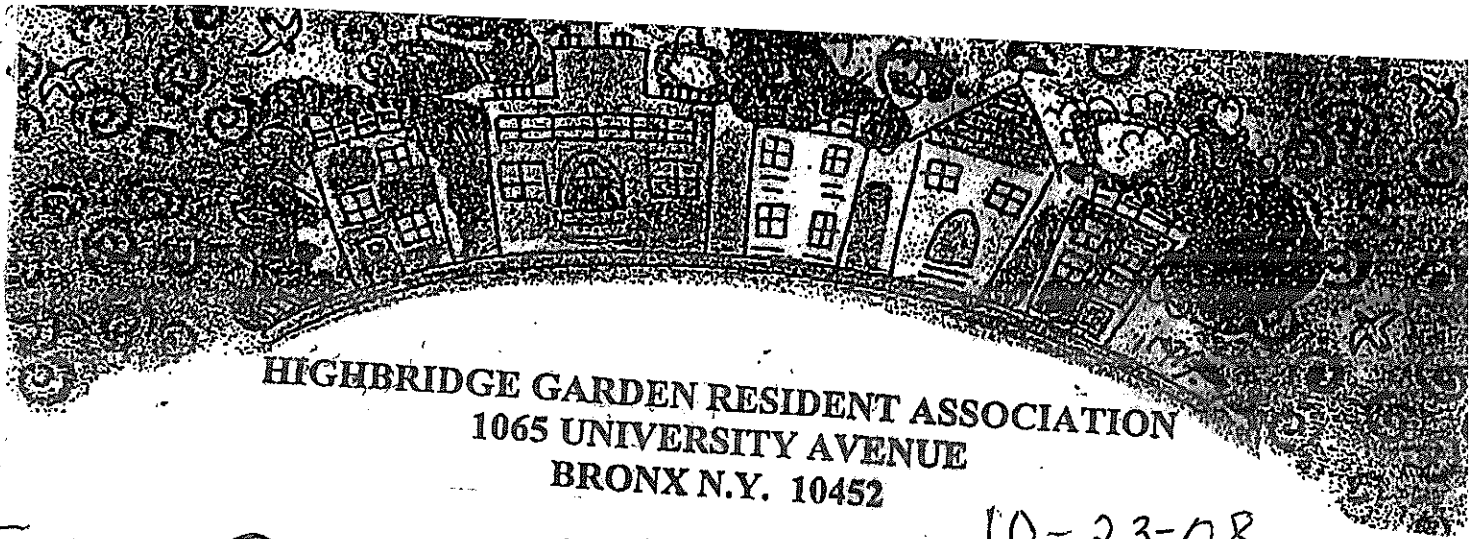
It took them being late dued  
to harsh weather, numerous times of being late  
and me fighteling for them to give them  
a  $\frac{1}{2}$  fare pass

2

Now I am a grandmother raising two of my grandsons here in Highbridge thirty five years later with the same problems. I shudder to think what would happen if they had to go the route.

These are our children and we want them safe. Had this been a more affluent neighborhood I don't think problem would exist. We need a middle school now.

Gloria Lasmont



HIGHBRIDGE GARDEN RESIDENT ASSOCIATION  
1065 UNIVERSITY AVENUE  
BRONX N.Y. 10452

10-23-08

To the Speaker Quinn and  
all Council members:

Re: Middle School for Highbridge Youth.

Good morning.

My name is Joanne Smithermon. I <sup>we</sup> lived in the NYCHA development Highbridge Gardens, for 50<sup>th</sup> years. I'm a mother of 5, all adults now. All went to Public Schools. Former T.P.A. President of PS 11 + CES 126. <sup>I have</sup> always been active in my community. Education is ~~an~~ very important for all communities.

But now my Community School's are busting at all ends. <sup>And</sup> children have to travel to get to Schools on other sides of Grand Concourse. By Bus's at the age of 9. Wake-up at 6:00 AM to get to School on time. Travel back home by 4:30 P.M.

2)

FROM THE DESK OF  
JOANNE E. SMITHERMAN

---

TO:

They miss out on any kind of afterschool programs or other sports activities (Boys + Girls). <sup>When they get home they only</sup> have time to do homework - Eat - Bed. In Nighbridge we have hills, and dangerous across streets by them self's #6 Bus + #13 - #11. all these bus's go to schools our children attend. we are in a two fare zone. It is very confusing for a young person to change from one bus to another. mothers have walk their child to make sure they take the right bus. Then walk back home up a hill, and pray that their child comes home safe. I would hope one day, soon, you can see and hear the concerns of our mothers and youth have to say. we need a middle school, we have the site, we need your voice and support in making this dream happen.

Frances Tejada  
939 Woodycrest Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10452

Good Afternoon City Council Members & Representatives of the Department of Education

My name is Frances Tejada and I have lived 43 years in the neighborhood of Highbridge. I attended schools in Highbridge as a child and I have four children, a twenty-seven year old son, Danny, an eighteen year old son, Simone, a sixteen year old daughter, Lilly, and my youngest daughter, Francine, who is three and I hope will be able to attend the Highbridge Middle School.

Both my children and I have been in both Highbridge Public and Catholic schools for our education as our respective families struggled to pay the bills and pay for a Catholic Education. In Highbridge, everyone who can afford it wants their child in Sacred Heart, because Sacred Heart is the only school in Highbridge that has a middle school. It wasn't always that way, people talk about when the first neighborhood schools, PS 73 and PS 11 were designed to be First Grade through Eighth Grade, but that changed several years before I began school at PS 73. Highbridge went through many changes during that decade before I began to attend school. It went from an Irish, Italian and Jewish neighborhood to one that was a majority Black and Puerto Rican community. Like much of the South Bronx, Highbridge underwent numerous changes, losing stores, shops, movie theaters, banks – they said the Bronx Was Burning – and then we lost our middle schools. District 9 in the Bronx built giant Middle Schools on the east side of the district, all on the far side of the Grand Concourse - IS 145, IS 166, IS 22 – and designated that this is where all students were to attend regardless of the difficulty of travel to and from school.

The growing new population in Highbridge turned the once K-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Schools into Elementary Schools, and soon the schools were unable to meet the demand. After the Department of Education and the City refused to listen to the fact the one of the neighborhood schools was 200 seats overcrowded, students, teachers, and parents went on strike closing down Ogden Avenue until the Mayor had to agree to build a new school, PS 126. That was forty years ago, and PS 126 was the last school built in Highbridge, hopefully we don't have to strike to build our Middle School – But we are ready if no one listens.

It is not safe for a child to have to travel across the Cross Bronx Expressway or Grand Concourse. Even when I was a child, traveling from Highbridge to IS 145 was dangerous, in fact there were so many fights, that my mother transferred me to IS 167 on Tremont Avenue. My mother wanted me to stay in Catholic School but could not afford it.

When I had my children I made every sacrifice to get them in Sacred Heart but that was not always possible, when I married my husband, we could not afford to send his daughter to Sacred Heart. However, I was unwilling to have her travel so far, so I used

every connection I had to get her into CES 218, a dual language K thru 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Magnet School that serves all of District 9. While slightly outside of Highbridge, located on Gerard Avenue & 167<sup>th</sup> Street, it represented the only possibility for my daughter to be close to home. However, most Highbridge students are unable to attend as the only way you are supposed to enter is through a lottery. The fact is all children in Highbridge deserve the right to a quality education. We should not have to chance anymore children failing or falling in trouble on these long trips to school. Enough is Enough. Highbridge needs a middle school.



MARIA DEL CARMEN ARROYO  
COUNCIL MEMBER, 17<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

o DISTRICT OFFICE  
384 EAST 149<sup>TH</sup> STREET, SUITE 300  
BRONX, NY 10455  
(718) 402-6130  
FAX: (718) 402-0539

o CITY HALL OFFICE  
250 BROADWAY, SUITE 1768  
NEW YORK, NY 10007  
(212) 788-7384  
FAX: (212) 788-8920

E-MAIL: arroyo@conncell.nyc.gov

THE COUNCIL  
OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

CHAIR - COMMITTEE ON  
AGING

COMMITTEES

EDUCATION

HEALTH

JUVENILE JUSTICE

LAND USE

SUB COMMITTEE

LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITTING & MARITIME USES

November 1, 2007

Mr. Chauncy Young  
Ms. Ocynthia William  
Ms. Earlene Wilkerson  
United Parents of Highbridge  
979 Ogden Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10452

Dear Mr. Young,

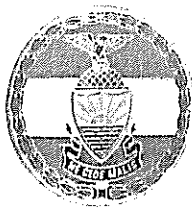
I write to express my support to United Parents of Highbridge for their efforts to build a middle school in the Highbridge community.

The lack of a middle school in the Highbridge community has forced children to traverse across the Grand Concourse or the Cross Bronx Expressway, in addition to enduring a very long trip on public transportation to attend middle school. Both the distance traveled and the mode of transportation children are force to take raise serious safety concerns for parents and the community at large. In addition, there has been a significant amount of new housing units built in the community and many more planned. It is therefore fitting that we do everything possible to build a new middle school in the Highbridge community.

I commend your for your leadership around this issue and look forward to working with you to accomplish what seems to be a most prudent and sensible goal.

Sincerely,

Maria del Carmen Arroyo



**Borough President Adolfo Carrion, Jr.**

November 16, 2007

United Parents of Highbridge  
Highbridge Community Life Center  
979 Ogden Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10452

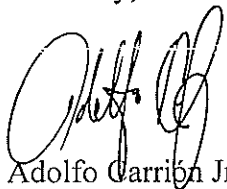
Dear Parents,

I am writing to express my support for your efforts to build a Middle/High School in the neighborhood of Highbridge.

Highbridge is experiencing huge growth, which requires a concomitant expansion of the capacity of the community's educational infrastructure. Currently, there are no middle schools within a reasonable distance for the children of Highbridge. Very young children are forced to travel long distances to reach their assigned middle schools, which are located on the other sides of both the Cross Bronx Expressway and the Grand Concourse. As a parent and elected official, I am deeply concerned about the safety of very young children traveling long distances.

I urge the Department of Education to work with the United Parents of Highbridge to build a middle school within this community.

Sincerely,



Adolfo Carrion Jr.



THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

AURELIA GREENE  
Assemblywoman 77<sup>TH</sup> District

930 Grand Concourse - Suite 1E  
Bronx, New York 10451  
(718) 538-2000  
FAX (718) 538-3310

Room 646  
Legislative Office Building  
Albany, New York 12248  
(518) 455-5671  
FAX (518) 455-5461

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

COMMITTEES  
Cities  
Education  
Rules  
Social Services  
Ways & Means

July 28, 2008

New York City Economic Development Corporation  
Attn: Government & Community Relations  
110 Williams Street  
New York, New York 10038

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to support Highbridge United in their efforts to build a community middle school which will house the children of Highbridge. Presently the Highbridge community lacks a middle school to accommodate those children who finish their elementary education. The United Parents of Highbridge have reached out to my office to inform me that they have found two locations for a potential middle/high school within the community. For the past year, the United Parents of Highbridge have worked tirelessly to find a viable place to ensure that the children of Highbridge can continue to learn there.

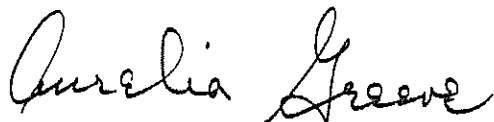
Currently Highbridge children travel vast distances to get to their assigned middle schools and they do so at a remarkably young age. Given that two of the five Highbridge elementary schools (PS 11 & 114) graduate at 4<sup>th</sup> grade, two at 5<sup>th</sup> grade (PS 73 & 199) and only one at 6<sup>th</sup> grade (PS 126) the majority of the Highbridge middle school students are only between 9 and 11 years old. The nearest middle schools are on the other side of the Cross Bronx Expressway or the Grand Concourse. Due to the logistics of the neighborhood and limited ways to access Highbridge as well as travel outside of Highbridge, it requires at minimum the usage of two public buses or a public bus and a train ride to get to any of the possible schools, which really makes for a lengthy commute for Highbridge students.

Over the past few months, a coalition of offices including my own have appealed to developers to allow the United Parents of Highbridge an opportunity to find a suitable piece of land to build a middle school. The Macombs Dam Park section owned by NYC Department of Parks on the south side of 161<sup>st</sup> Street and Jerome Avenue is an ideal location for the school. The New York City Economic Development Corporation is charged with the development of this area and I would like for your agency to consider including their proposed middle school within this project. It would be wonderful to keep the children of Highbridge within

the Highbridge community until they are old enough to venture outside of the community and do so at a responsible age.

I applaud the efforts of the United Parents of Highbridge, as they have seen the growing needs of the community and continue to advocate for the needs of our youngest constituents. It is my hope that you favorably consider the United Parents of Highbridge request, and should you have any concerns, please feel free to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Aurelia Greene". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Aurelia Greene  
Member of Assembly  
77<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

**Cc: United Parents of Highbridge**



# Alliance For Progress, Inc.

COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY

AFP

1070 Ogden Avenue, CS - 2  
Bronx, N.Y. 10452  
Tel.: (718) 992 - 6448  
Fax: (718) 992 - 7782  
E-mail: alliancecpml@verizon.net

Mrs. Antonia Diaz  
*Chairwoman Emeritus*

Mr. Gregory Tougranis  
*Chairman, I.A.*

Mr. Manuel Martínez  
*Executive Director*

**DELIVERED VIA FIRST CLASS MAIL & E-MAIL**

October 11, 2007

Mr. Chauncy Young  
Community Education Organizer  
Highbridge Community Life  
979 Ogden Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10452

**Re.: New Highbridge Middle School**

Dear Mr. Young:

I am writing to inform you that Alliance For Progress, Inc. (AFP) is dedicated to assisting the less fortunate and working families in climbing the social, economic, and academic ladder whereby individuals are formed to be financial, civic, and moral agents transforming society into a more just and equitable community. Therefore, it is only fitting that AFP promote said cause – to establish a new Highbridge to meet the present population influx and cultural composition of our community - Highbridge.

AFP strongly suggests that a new middle school be establish in which authentic scholarship may be taught especially as it relates to foreign languages (i.e.: English, French, Latin, and Spanish), the arts (i.e.: music and painting classes), hard sciences (i.e.: earth science, intro to bio., and intro to chem.), economics (i.e.: personal finance, banking system, intro to accounting) and the like, all the while having student excel in the establish NYS middle curriculum. It is crucial that this new school contain a few or all of the aforementioned in order to garner AFP's support in this endeavor. Too often our community gets stifled in the intricacies of the hype fomented by municipal agencies or representatives and the core of said objective - a sound and well rounded education, is dumb-down leaving the client (the student) with an ill - conceived notion of personal and academic success.

Thus, AFP will support and promote this cause so long as the new Highbridge middle school consortium fully considers these suggestions for the good of our community – for the present and future generations to come.

Sincerely,

Manuel Martínez  
Executive Director

HELEN DIANE FOSTER  
COUNCIL MEMBER, 16<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

□ DISTRICT OFFICE  
1377 JEROME AVENUE  
BRONX, NY 10452  
(718) 588-7500  
FAX: (718) 588-7790

□ CITY HALL OFFICE  
250 BROADWAY, ROOM 1770  
NEW YORK, NY 10007  
(212) 788-6856  
FAX: (212) 788-7764

fofoster@cityofnyc.nyc.us



THE COUNCIL  
OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

CHAIR  
PARKS & RECREATION

COMMITTEES

AGING

EDUCATION

GENERAL WELFARE

HEALTH

LOWER MANHATTAN REDEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC SAFETY

October 10, 2007

Ms. Ocyntia William  
Ms. Earlene Wilkerson  
United Parents of Highbridge  
979 Ogden Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10452

Dear Ms. William & Ms. Wilkerson:

I am pleased to write this letter of support for your campaign to build a middle school in the Highbridge community. The lack of a middle school in Highbridge is an historic injustice of many decades within the education system. I share your resolve to make a reality of our dream of building a middle school for our Highbridge community.

Highbridge children have to travel across the Grand Concourse or the Cross Bronx Expressway to attend middle school. They have to take two forms of transit for their lengthy trip to and from school. I find it alarming to learn that the majority of our children going to middle school are only between 9 and 11 years old. This is a security concern for parents and children that can only be addressed by the building of a new middle school in Highbridge.

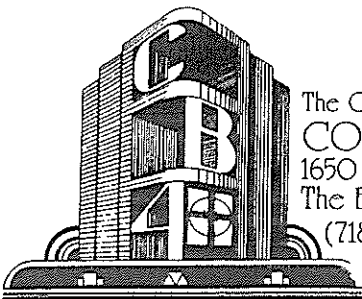
I thank you for the recent efforts of the United Parents of Highbridge, in cooperation with several other Highbridge groups, for your sensible demand for a Highbridge middle school. I also appreciate your efforts to locate sites where a middle school can be built.

Thanking you in advance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helen Diane Foster".

Helen Diane Foster.



The City of New York  
COMMUNITY BOARD 4  
1650 Selwyn Avenue Suites 11A & 11B  
The Bronx, New York, 10457  
(718) 299-0800  
FAX (718) 294-7870 EMAIL: bx04@cb.nyc.gov

M& D. LEE EZELL  
Board Chair

VACANT  
District Manager

31 October 2007

United Parents of Highbridge  
979 Ogden Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10452

Dear Parents of Highbridge:

At a regular meeting of Community Board Four on 23 October 2007, with a quorum present and acting throughout, the Board voted, unanimously, to support the efforts of Highbridge Parents to campaign for a middle/high school in the Highbridge section of District Four in the Bronx.

We understand and strongly believe that children deserve safe schools in reasonable proximity to where they live. We further understand that in many communities this is a given and parents need not hold meetings, marches and otherwise plead for this necessary convenience. In our case, we must join hands and work to demand that we be heard.

Community Board Four has always supported this request and we are happy to join all those who have taken this stand on behalf of the children of district four.

We especially applaud the work on this issue by the leadership of the parents and Mr. Chauncy Young who has been very stalwart and diligent in the organizing efforts and in educating the community.

If Community Board Four can assist further, in any way, please call on us.

Again, many thanks for your admirable work.

In Service to the Community,



(Ms.) D. Lee Ezell  
Board Chair

cc: Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg  
Hon. Jose M. Serrano  
Hon. Ruth Hassell-Thompson  
Hon. Aurelia Greene  
Hon. Carmen Arroyo  
Hon. Michael Benjamin  
Hon. Adolfo Carrion, Jr.  
Chancellor Joel I. Klein  
Hon. Helen Diane Foster  
Hon. Maria Del Carmen Arroyo  
Hon. Maria Baez  
Mr. Maynard Charles  
Mr. Thomas Lucania

JOSÉ M. SERRANO  
SENATOR, 28TH DISTRICT

DISTRICT OFFICE  
30 EAST 101ST STREET  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10451  
TEL: 212-662-6629  
FAX: 212-662-6626

ALBANY OFFICE  
600 CONGRESS AVENUE BUILDING  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247  
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SERRANO@GMAIL.COM  
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NEW YORK  
STATE  
SENATE  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247



RANKING MINORITY MEMBER  
TOURISM, RECREATION &  
SPORTS DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEES  
AGING  
EDUCATION  
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION  
HIGHER EDUCATION  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
RULES

July 21, 2008

United Parents of Highbridge  
979 Ogden Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10452

To the United Parents of Highbridge:

I write to you in strong support of the continued efforts to establish a Middle School in Highbridge. Children in this community are forced to travel a great distance to attend their assigned middle schools – all of which are located beyond major thoroughfares like the Grand Concourse and Cross Bronx Expressway. It is a commute that requires a minimum of two public buses, or a bus and train ride.

A new Middle School is necessary not simply because Highbridge is a community isolated from other portions of the borough, but also because the dynamics of the Highbridge population very much demand a Middle School. It is the fastest growing part of Community District #4, and with a high percentage of young families.

I am proud to report that Highbridge residents are some of the most active and engaged in my entire Senate District. They have established a broad coalition of community stakeholders. In addition, they have garnered the support of their local, state and federal elected representatives. It is a coalition that does not simply advocate for a cause, but one that actively assumes the responsibilities needed to achieve substantive goals.

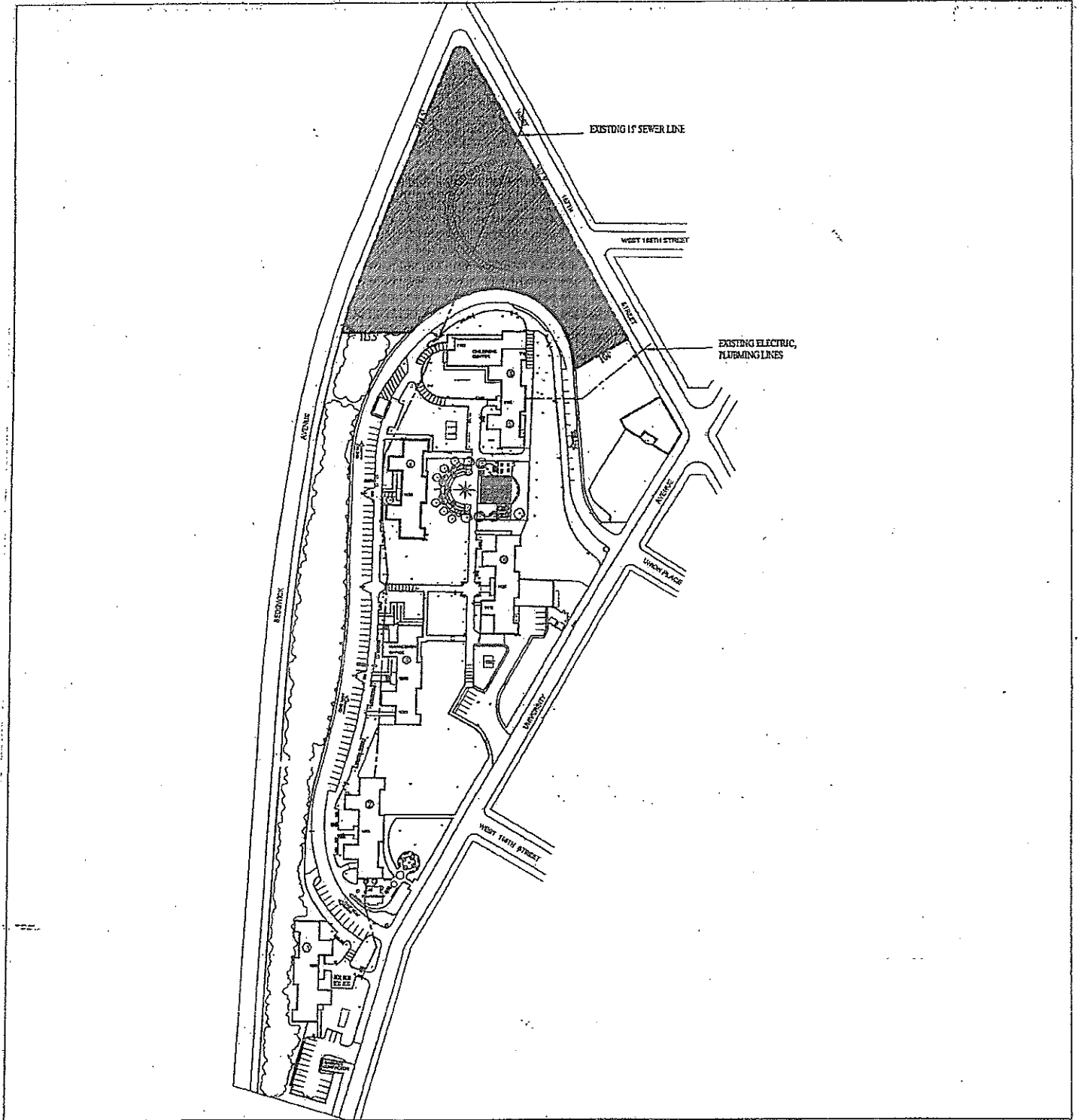
One of these responsibilities is to identify possible sites for the Middle School. Following unsuccessful efforts to secure a three-acre plot of land owned by a major developer in Highbridge, the community has asked the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to consider the construction of a Middle School on Parking Garage C, adjacent to the existing Yankee Stadium.

I believe that EDC owes it to the parents and residents of Highbridge to give this proposal all due time and consideration. With strong community input and government engagement, we can look forward to expanding our public school infrastructure in a way that benefits the communities most in need of such efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "José M. Serrano".


José M. Serrano



HIGHBRIDGE GARDENS



LEGEND

 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE

## 2. Highbridge Gardens

### Location:

- Bronx / Block 2527 / Part of Lot 32
- On the block bounded by West 167<sup>th</sup> Street, University Avenue (Dr. Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard), and Sedgwick Avenue.
- Prior to conveyance, the lot will be subdivided to create a separate zoning lot.
- Community Board 4

### Development Site Area:

Approximately 110,000 square feet. Developers should propose location of the new buildings and accessory parking on the Development Site. Exact Development Site boundaries are to be determined after designation of the Developer. See **Exhibit A.2** for general site context and approximate dimensions. Selected Developer will be required to provide a site survey.

### Current Use: Vacant land.

### New Uses: New construction of two buildings with a total of approximately 200 residential rental units and accessory parking.

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the units will be set aside for NYCHA residents or residents on the NYCHA Section 8 waiting list. Priority will be given to senior households currently residing in under-occupied units at Highbridge Gardens. See **Section III (F) (Marketing and Preferences)** for further details.

Developers will be required to provide a community room in one of the proposed buildings and a Resident Service Plan (RSP) with a focus on recreational activities for youth and services for seniors. See **Section III (B) (Obligations of the Selected Developer)** for further details.

### Rent Limits: Rents must be affordable at the following levels:

- At least 60% of all units affordable to households earning below 60% AMI.
- For the remaining units, preference will be given to those Applicants who provide a greater mix of income levels at one or more additional affordability tiers above 60% AMI.

Each affordability tier proposed should be no less than a ten percentage point interval and must assume a reasonable marketing band.

### Zoning: The site is currently zoned R7-1. Applicants are expected to submit an as-of-right proposal.

### Acquisition Price:

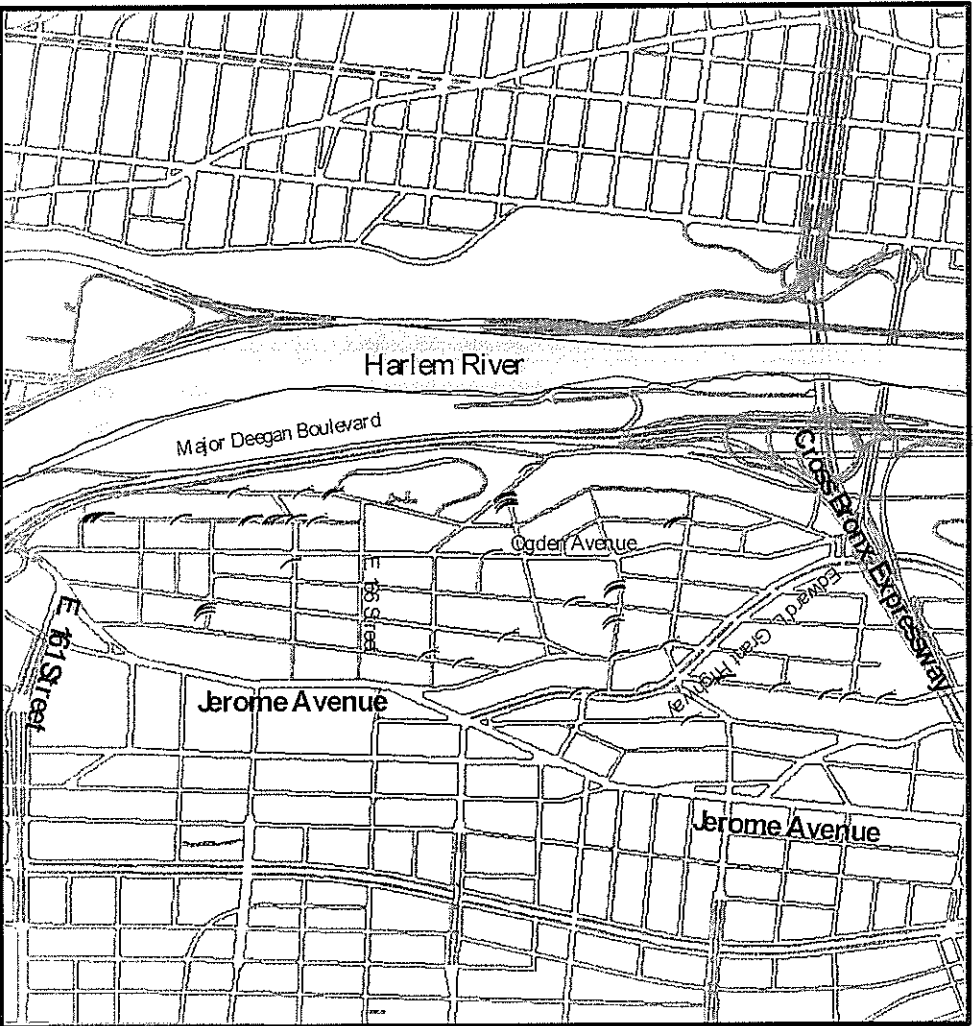
The acquisition price will be at least \$10,000 for each dwelling unit built on the Site. Preference will be given to applicants who propose a higher acquisition price.

**A Survey of Recent Development in  
the Highbridge Neighborhood**

**January 2005-April 2007**



# Location of Development in the Highbridge Neighborhood January 2005-April 2007



( ) New Development Location  
— Streets

Bronx Borough President's Office  
Bureau of Topography Database 2007

0 500 1,000 2,200 Feet  
Cartography by Gilda Franga  
May 2007

# Top Developments

Investment	Owner/Developer	Description	Address
\$12,000,000	Jackson Development	Mixed Use 75 unit Apartment Building with 1 <sup>st</sup> floor retail: Financed by HPPD-421A	1500 Jesup Ave.
\$10,000,000	Atlantic Development	49-unit Residential Building: Financed by HPPD-421	1450 Jesup Ave.
\$10,000,000	Atlantic Development	81-unit Residential Building: Financed by HPPD-421A	1401 Jesup Ave.
\$10,000,000	Atlantic Development	127-unit Residential Building: Financed by HPPD-421A	1404 Jesup Ave.
\$10,000,000	Atlantic Development	39-unit Residential Building: Financed by HPPD-421A	1345 Shakespeare Ave.
\$ 5,000,000	Albert Sutton: Friendly Baptist Church, Inc.	33-unit Residential Building: Private Financing	1262 Nelson Ave.

# Residential Housing Type

<b>Building Type</b>	<b>Number of Structures Built</b>
1-family	1
2-family	5
3-family	34
Multifamily	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57</b>

# Commercial Development

<b>Business Type</b>	<b>Number of Structures Built</b>	<b>Addresses Issued</b>
Warehouses	1	1445 Cromwell Ave.
Vehicle Maintenance Facilities	1	1302 Edward L. Grant Highway
Total	2	

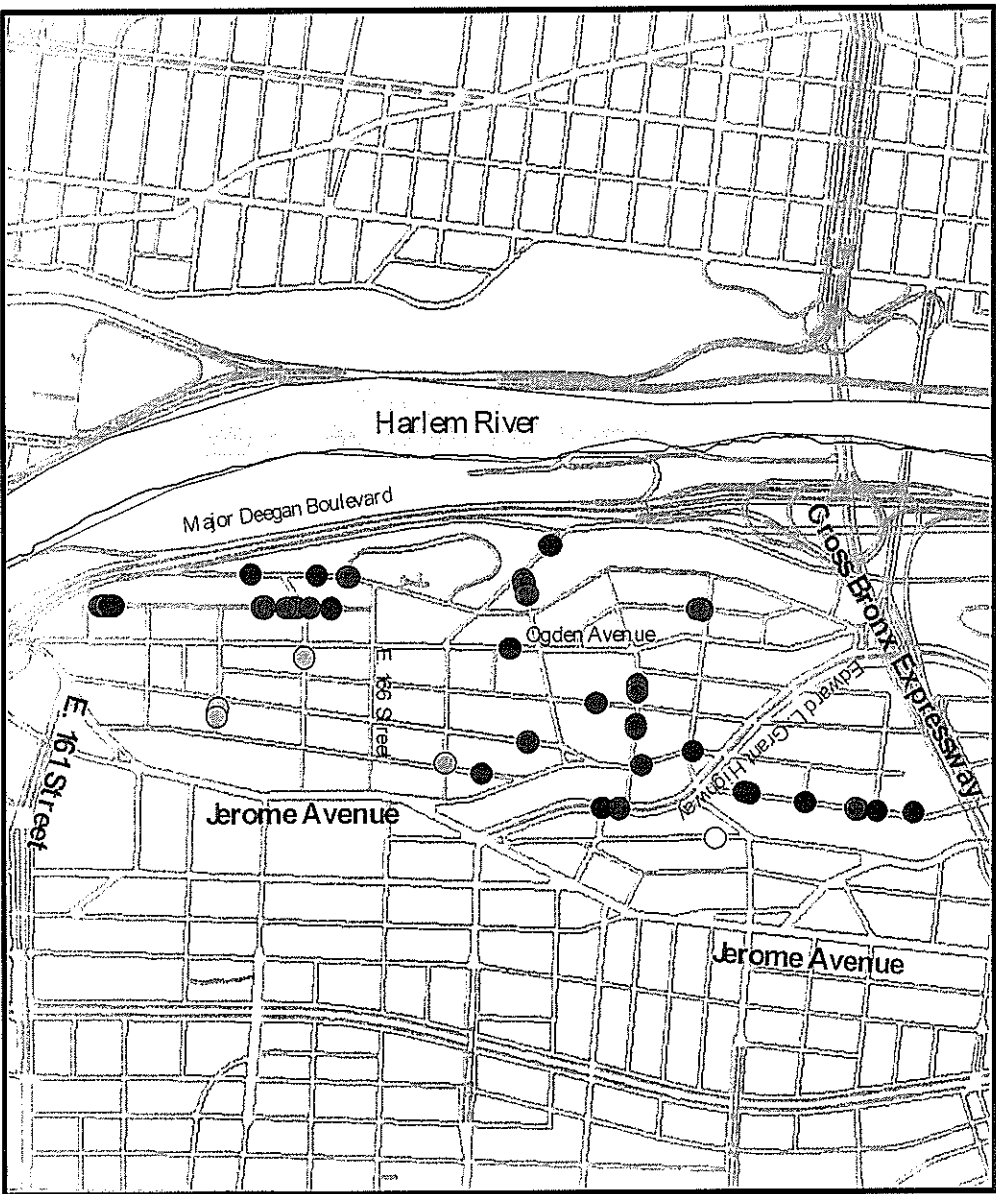
# Development from January 2005-April 2007

LAND USE	ADDRESSES ISSUED	INVESTMENT
Residential	57	\$80,867,463
Commercial	2	\$7,657,998
Institutional	0	\$0
Total	63	\$88,525,461

TOTAL ADDRESSES ISSUED: 59

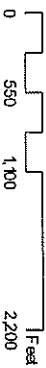
TOTAL INVESTMENT: \$88,525,461

# Location of Different Developments in the Highbridge Neighborhood January 2005-April 2007

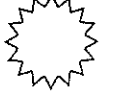
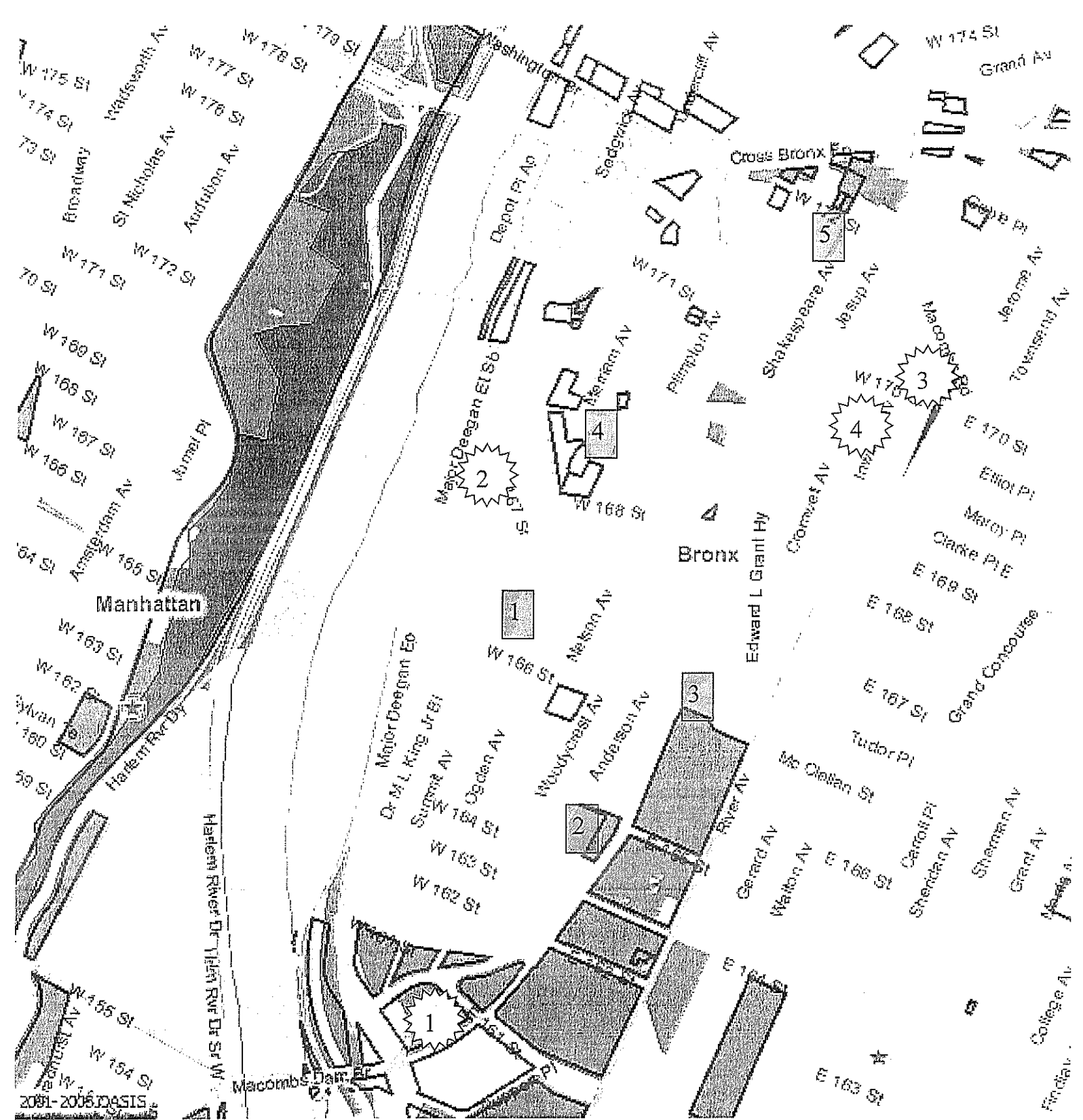


- Building Type**
- 1-family
  - ◐ 2-family
  - ◑ 3-family
  - Apartment
  - ◕ Vehicle Maintenance
  - ◖ Warehouse
  - - - Streets

Brax Borough President's Office  
Bureau of Topography Database 2007



Cartography by Giada Pranga  
May 2007



Proposed Sites for Highbridge Middle/High School



Locations of the 5 Highbridge Public Elementary Schools

- 1. Yankee Stadium Garage C
- 2. Proposed Highbridge Gardens Development
- 3. Ten Story Building on 170th & Plaza
- 4. Old Factory on Cromwell & 170th

- 1. PS 126 175 West 166th Street
- 2. PS 73 1020 Anderson Avenue
- 3. PS 114 1155 Cromwell Avenue
- 4. PS 11 1257 Ogden Avenue
- 5. PS 199 1449 Shakespeare Avenue



DEBORAH J. GLICK  
Assemblymember 66<sup>TH</sup> District  
New York County

THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

CHAIR  
Higher Education Committee  
  
COMMITTEES  
Environmental Conservation  
Rules  
Ways & Means

**Testimony of Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick  
Addressing School Overcrowding and the School Siting Process  
October 24, 2008**

As the Assemblymember representing neighborhoods in Lower Manhattan that urgently need new schools to help reduce overcrowding, I testify today to express my serious concerns regarding the Department of Education's (DOE) approach to siting schools and the lack of urgency demonstrated by the DOE in acquiring additional space.

In a city that has seen an explosion of luxury condominiums and towering office buildings, the lack of planning for new school space has been astonishing. The DOE needs to adjust its approach to school siting and work collaboratively with the Department of City Planning and local elected officials to ensure that appropriate planning is done to ensure that every NYC child has access to a public education in a classroom with an appropriate number of students.

According to the DOE, acquiring new school sites is not a priority because, according to the Blue Book which lists the capacity of all schools in the City, there are 100,000 more seats than students. Unfortunately, that number is based on out-of-date and faulty calculations that do not consider class size goals or pocket overcrowding within districts. The use of these misleading utilization rates has forced some schools who were inaccurately designated as under capacity but actually were not, to utilize closets as classrooms and convert cluster rooms to classroom space as more students are enrolled in the school by central DOE administration.

Tragically, we have seen almost complete inaction on the part of the city in searching for sites for new schools. Even after the downtown community identified a state-owned building for sale at 75 Morton Street that could have provided seats for hundreds of middle school students, the City never made a bid or even wrote a letter of interest. The State has now withdrawn the proposed sale and it appears that the City still is not pursuing conversations with the state. This is unfortunate as they should be working with the State to craft a creative agreement whereby a school at 75 Morton could be a reality.

There are a variety of improvements that can be made to the DOE's methodology regarding siting. At a minimum, every city- and state-owned building for sale should be evaluated as a potential school, and a list of those properties should be made available online. No city- or state-owned building should be put up for sale, and no Request for Proposals should be solicited on such a building without first consulting the DOE and the local community.

Furthermore, the possibility of acquiring or leasing parochial schools for school use should be more aggressively pursued. In many cases, these schools could be rapidly leased at relatively low cost, and need little renovation to be made into public schools.

It is unnerving to hear DOE officials simultaneously insist that overcrowding in downtown schools will improve in the coming years while they state that acquiring new classroom space is a last resort. Overestimating the capacity of current schools by relying on faulty Blue Book data ensures that current Downtown schools remain overcrowded and removes the impetus to site new schools. The City has a history of waiting until schools are filled to overcapacity before taking any steps. A more forward thinking approach must be employed to reduce overcrowding. This must include a more neighborhood specific analysis so that no student is forced to learn in a crowded classroom or a hall closet.

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10-24-08

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: GLORIA GULNONES

Address: 1175 Anderson Ave Apt 504

I represent: United Parents of Highbridge

Address: 979 Caden Ave Bronx, NY

10457

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Craig Shlay (sp.)

Address: Committee to Save 109

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JOEL MYERS

Address: Committee to Save PS109

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: GWEN GOODWIN

Address: Chair of Committee to Save PS109

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Louise Harrison

Address: Class St Manhattan

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: 124 Waverly Pl NY NY

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: PETER ANDERSON

Address: Committee to Save PS109

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: BAKANI Camara

Address: 1329 PLIMPTON AVE.

I represent: United Parents of Highbridge

Address: 154 W 164 St.

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Hon. Helen Marshall

Address: 120-55 Queens Blvd

I represent: Borough Hall

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Magida Aboufadi

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Manhattan CB 5

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10/24/08

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Usmania Tejada

Address: 977 21st Ave

I represent: United Parents of Highbridge

Address: 2177

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10/24/08

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Debra Freeman

Address: Lower Lab School

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chavon Young

Address: 1177 Anderson Ave

I represent: United Parents of Highbridge

Address: 974 Ogden Avenue Apt 4F

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THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Neal Tepe

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: District Council 1707 AFSCME

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Math Borden  
(PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: AM Glick

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10/24/08

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dawn Philip

Address: 151 W. 30 St.

I represent: New York Lawyers for the Public Interest.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Layla Law G. Siko

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Parent

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tina Shiller

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Parent

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tricia Joyce

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Parent

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tina Schiller

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Parental

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jennifer Freeman

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 10-24-08

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: REBECCA JAMES

Address: 299 W 10th St, 2CD

I represent: Parent Assoc. C/CC. CC-Dr. Formis

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Formis  
pres  
S/PTA  
Michelle  
& Kimberly  
D2812cd*

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ann Kjellberg

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Public School Parent Advocacy Council

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Keen Berger

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Community Board 2

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sue Crowson

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Public School Parent Advocacy Council

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: GARTH HARRIES

Address: Chief Executive for Port Folio Development

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LORRAINE GRILLO - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR / CHIEF OF STAFF

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: SCA

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10-24-08

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARY D SILVER

Address: 165 EAST 32 ST.

I represent: RS116 - CFC D2

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

APR 12:00

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10/24/08

Name: Robert Ely (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 451 Hudson St

I represent: Parents of Public School #3

Address: Hudson St, Greenwich Village

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Irene Kaufman (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 40 Perry St

I represent: Public School Parent Advocacy Comm

THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 10-24-08

Name: Tarrell Childs for Joanne Smitherman (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 1065 University Ave #9C, Bronx NY 10452

I represent: Highbridge Gardens

Address: Same as above.

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Appearance Card*

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor     in opposition

Date: 10-24-08

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name:

Wanda Smith

Address:

1072 Woodhurst Avenue Bx NY 5B

I represent:

Highbridge Life Center

Address:

156 W 164 St

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀