



**Department of  
Education**

*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

**Testimony of the NYC Department of Education  
on Community Schools and Renewal Schools and Intro. No. 262  
before the NYC Council Committee on Education**

February 27, 2018

Good morning Chair Treyger and members of the Education Committee here today. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on New York City's work to support struggling schools, and to bring schools and communities together as partners to build a better future for students and families.

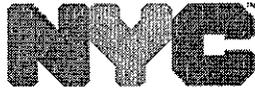
My name is Christopher Caruso, and I am the executive director of the NYC Department of Education's (DOE) Office of Community Schools. Here with me this morning are Aimee Horowitz, executive superintendent for the Office of Renewal Schools, Laura Feijoo, senior supervising superintendent, and Cheryl Watson Harris, senior executive director of the Office of Field Support.

DOE's top priority is to provide all students with access to a high-quality education that ensures their future success as productive citizens and critical thinkers. As part of this Administration's commitment to equity and excellence for all students, we have implemented a number of reforms to improve instruction, streamline school support and accountability, and provide students with the academic and social-emotional supports necessary to help them succeed. The Community Schools Initiative and Renewal Schools program are strategies that embody this commitment.

### **Community Schools**

In 2014, Mayor de Blasio released a comprehensive strategic plan to "launch and sustain a system of over 100 Community Schools across New York City by 2017." I am happy to report that we have more than doubled our initial goal and now have 227 Community Schools, across every borough, serving over 116,000 students.

I know first-hand the power of Community Schools as I have spent my career at the intersection of schools and communities. I started my career in 1998 as a program director for the Children's Aid Society at one of their early Community Schools—P.S. 8 in Washington Heights. I witnessed the power of family engagement and youth voice. I saw the joy on parents' faces when we were able to provide health and dental services to their children on site. I felt school culture improve as relationships between students and adults deepened through mentoring and expanded learning time programs. I also learned that this work is not easy; that partnerships and collaboration do not necessarily come naturally. And now, it is a privilege to have my career come full circle and have the opportunity to lead NYC's efforts to scale the Community Schools strategy citywide.



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Today, we have transformed 227 schools into Community Schools—welcoming places that provide students with the support necessary to succeed on their journey inside and outside of the classroom. This is thanks to the leadership of the Mayor and the Chancellor, the advocacy and partnership of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) and the City Council, and the commitment and dedication of community-based organizations and thousands of educators and students,

Community Schools are not a new concept, especially in New York City where we have deep roots in this work—from settlement houses supporting public schools, to the Beacon School Program, to the Children’s Aid network of community schools, and more recently to the UFT’s Community Learning Schools. What is new is that this Administration has built a system to support the growth and the quality of Community Schools, we have instituted a common approach, and increased funding and professional development.

We have defined Community Schools in NYC as a strategy to organize resources and share leadership so that instruction, health, youth development, and family engagement are integrated into the fabric of schools. Community Schools are more than a program, or a model, or a collection of services. Rather, they represent a different way of thinking for both schools and for communities. Community Schools recognize that in order for students to achieve academic excellence, schools must support the whole child and their family.

NYC Community Schools share common structures and services that are grounded in the evidence that collaborative partnerships are more likely to realize results. The common elements of NYC’s Community School strategy include:

- Defined partnerships with a community-based organization (CBO)
- Collaborative leadership practices and a community school director (CSD)
- Data-driven continuous improvement efforts
- Expanded learning time, after school and during the summer
- Robust family engagement
- Health and wellness services

The 227 schools became Community Schools in several different ways:

1. In 2014, we invited the schools with the highest rates of chronic absenteeism to apply to become a community school. 45 were selected.
2. In 2015, 94 Renewal Schools became Community Schools as part of their school-turnaround strategy.
3. In 2017, 70 schools, in 23 districts, were awarded federal 21st Century Community Learning Center grants from the New York State Education Department to become Community Schools.



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In addition to the 227 Community Schools supported by DOE, there are Community Schools that operate independently, outside of DOE's network through philanthropic support, pre-existing relationships, and/or entrepreneurial leadership.

When you walk into a Community School, you immediately notice a difference. You see educators and community partners working together to meet students and families where they are, providing the supports necessary for students to meet high educational standards. Our goal is to create a warm and welcoming environment where all students and families feel they belong.

The Community School Director (CSD) role has evolved to become an important leader and key partner to our principals. The CSDs coordinate partnerships, and target supports and interventions to the right children at the right time. Through these partnerships, we are providing more time for learning, academic support, enrichment activities, health and wellness services, and more. For example, Fiorella Guevara, a CSD with El Puente at M.S. 50 in Williamsburg, leads attendance meetings, coordinates health supports for students and families, ensures culturally relevant expanded learning opportunities, and supports students' leadership skills.

Community Schools also facilitate a direct connection between home and school. School staff conduct home visits and parents are invited into schools for classes and workshops. We know parents are a vital asset to public education, and we need their partnership. By working closely with parents, we are empowering them to become leaders in the school and support their child's learning at home.

Over 400 parents either completed or are currently participating in our Core Leader Program (a four-part training series during the school year that focuses on parent-to-parent outreach and leadership development) and 11,000 parents/caregivers have participated in an event or taken action at a Community School.

We are encouraged by the early results in our Community Schools. In the three years since the Office of Community Schools was created:

- Chronic absenteeism has dropped 5.7% (citywide, rates have increased by 0.3%);
- English Language Arts (ELA) scores are up 10.7% (citywide, up 12.2%);
- Math scores are up 4.5% (citywide, up 3.6%);
- Graduation rates are up 11.2% (twice as much as citywide growth of 5.6%); and
- Incidents and suspensions are down as well.

In addition, social workers and mental health providers have led groups and provided counseling for thousands of students and legal professionals have met with 1,060 students / family members.

Thanks to support from the City Council, some schools have partnered with the Food Bank for NYC to create food pantries in our schools so that hunger does not distract from learning. At East Bronx Academy for the Future in the Bronx, not only do families have access to food and basic personal and feminine hygiene items, but students volunteer to work in the pantry, and learn basic business skills. The Council has also allowed us to expand adult education classes in



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23 schools; adding 76 new classes and providing adult students with social service and employment supports.

Public-private partnerships play a key role in the sustainability strategy for Community Schools. Through a partnership with Warby Parker, over 140,000 students have had vision screenings and 35,000 children have received free eyeglasses since 2015. Through a partnership with Sprint, we are providing high school students with free Wi-Fi hotspots, so kids can complete their assignments and study outside of schools hours, helping to address the “homework gap.” Students keep the hotspots throughout their time in high school.

Renaissance School of the Arts in East Harlem exemplifies how the strategy works. The school leadership and faculty implemented new teacher training. Partnership with Children’s (PwC) social work team provided counseling services, facilitated a parent support group, and trained teachers on social-emotional learning strategies. As PwC reported: “By working together, Renaissance and PwC have developed a flourishing school culture where a strong student voice is developing in and out of the classroom. You see it in an active student government, a student-run school store, and even the way students communicate and support their ideas when interacting with adults. Since 2014, the percentage of students proficient in ELA has increased 17 points and the percentage of students proficient in math has increased 13 points.”

**Renewal Schools**

Renewal Schools are New York City schools that need the most urgent attention. The program was launched in November 2014. Currently, 78 of the 227 Community Schools are also Renewal Schools. While the Community School strategy is an essential component of school turnaround efforts, we do not believe that implementing a Community Schools strategy alone is enough to turn around a persistently low-performing school. NYC Community Schools are just one component of the larger Renewal Schools strategy. So, while all Renewal Schools are Community Schools, not all Community Schools are Renewal Schools.

The Renewal Schools program is the most ambitious turnaround program in the country. The program provides unprecedented resources, alongside targeted supports and increased accountability to help long-struggling schools change outcomes for students. At the heart of the program is a commitment to invest in communities that have long been underserved. We also extended the school day at every school by five hours per week, and provided these schools with 100% of their Fair Student Funding allocation, amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars per year, and millions over the last three years at each school. These additional resources at the local level give principals and school leaders the ability to provide the tailored supports and services necessary to best serve their students, improve teaching, and lift up communities.

Across the Renewal Schools program, we have seen encouraging results, ELA and Math scores have increased by 10 and 4 percentage points respectively, the graduation rate has increased by 13.5 percentage points, attendance has increased by 4 percentage points, and chronic



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absenteeism has decreased by 11 percentage points. Renewal Schools have also seen significant improvements in school climate, teacher retention, and classroom instruction.

As a result of the program, 21 Renewal Schools that have seen strong and steady gains have been designated as Rise Schools, marking the beginning of the gradual transition out of the Renewal Schools program. The 21 Rise Schools have seen steady gains across multiple measures, and have demonstrated a sustainable school improvement structure that will allow them to build on their progress.

Rise Schools will permanently maintain their Community School partnerships and 100% Fair Student Funding. Over the course of this school year and next, Rise Schools' support structure and resources will gradually transition from the Office of Renewal Schools to their local Field Support Centers (FSCs). These schools will have greater autonomy and receive targeted supports as well as continued monitoring in order to build on the progress they have made over the past three years.

Forty-seven Renewal Schools are continuing in the program. These schools have made some progress and we believe that with additional time, support, and supervision, they can reach their benchmarks and become Rise Schools. Local superintendents and field support centers are working together with each of these schools to ensure they have a tailored plan to achieve Renewal success. As part of this critical fourth year, superintendents are providing additional monitoring to schools, completing four visits between January and May. Directors of School Renewal are visiting schools at least twice a week to provide additional feedback and guidance, and each Renewal School has set clear goals in ELA and Math that will help them reach their benchmarks by next year.

Together, Aimee, Cheryl, Laura, and my team in the Office of Community Schools have developed a model that streamlines our process, clarifies expectations, and improves communications and sharing of resources between our offices and schools. We have more work to do, but we are already receiving positive feedback and seeing indicators of progress.

We knew when we set out on this journey that we wouldn't succeed every time. There is no single formula for school turnaround: it requires the right leadership, hard work, investment, adjustment, doggedness, and a dedicated community. Not all of our schools are where we wanted. As a result, schools that have not made enough progress and are not on track to meet their Renewal performance benchmarks and Rise criteria have been proposed for school redesign. This includes closure, grade truncation, merger, and in some cases re-staffing. In each case, a careful review of the school was conducted and an individual plan developed based on what is best for students. School closure is never our preferred option, but it is necessary in certain instances.

The investments we have made in our Community Schools and Renewal Schools are common sense and make a difference, not only for the students attending these schools, but for their families and the larger communities in these neighborhoods. We are proud of the progress we



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have made to ensure that each child has an equal chance to succeed and thrive in the classroom and beyond.

Finally, I would like to turn to the proposed legislation. Intro No. 262 requires the DOE to provide school-level data regarding students receiving special education services. We support this bill and look forward to working with the City Council.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you on this important issue. We will be happy to answer any questions you may have.



PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK

## Letitia James

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**Testimony of the Public Advocate for the City of New York, Letitia James,  
Before the New York City Council Education Committee  
February 27, 2018**

Good Morning. My name is Letitia James and I am the Public Advocate for the City of New York.

I want to thank Chair Treyger, his staff, and the committee staff for holding today's hearing on the fate of some of our most vulnerable public schools and school children.

The Renewal Schools program was announced with great fanfare in November, 2014. Three and a half years and hundreds of millions of dollars later, it is hard to argue that this program has been a success. Many of the renewal schools have failed to close the achievement gap in any meaningful way and seven in nine enroll fewer students now than they did when the program began.

But just because the program looks like a failure, it doesn't mean we should just give up on these schools and these kids. The announcement that nine Renewal Schools will be shuttered and others consolidated, feels like a troubling return to the last administration's policy of closing schools that could be saved through better policy.

My office has heard from parents, teachers and advocates about how Renewal Schools effort is plagued by disorganization, inefficiency, and burdensome bureaucracy that impedes real progress at many schools. In November 2016, my office hosted a forum on Renewal Schools and issued detailed recommendations that could have helped, and could still help, turn this program around. Just this month, in the wake of the announced closures, I sent another letter to the Chancellor urging policy changes in leadership and alignment, metrics and accountability, academic strategy, and resources and sustainability. These schools can be saved, this program can be saved, but it will take real commitment and will.

We need to aggressively recruit the most talented principals, with significant experience working with high-needs student populations and ensure that these principals and their district superintendents are fully supportive of the community school model. We need better coordination with other City agencies, such as DYCD, ACS, and HRA, as well as more alignment between the various DOE offices that interface with renewal schools.

We also need smarter, less rigid performance and accountability metrics that consider more than just test scores and attendance.

We must provide more tools for teacher recruitment and retention and closer analysis of the unique needs of individual schools. In particular, school demographics must be analyzed to identify the types of teachers, such as special education, bilingual, STEM, or literacy, that are

needed to serve that student population, and then targeted incentives created to recruit individuals with those qualifications.

We also need more transparency and accountability on what appears to be rampant over-spending based on the demonstrated results. I support significant investment in high-need schools, but we need to spend smarter and more transparently. That is why, most importantly, perhaps, Renewal Schools need long-term, sustainable funding, not premature closures.

Research shows that schools do not turn around in two or three years; it often takes five to ten years of stable, sustained effort for student outcomes to show significant improvement. Multiple sources of funding – city, state, federal and private – must be blended and aligned around a unified community school plan. Turning a school around is long, hard, arduous work, but it is worth it.

Shutting down a school because your first plan didn't work will always be the wrong approach. We can do better, and I look forward to continuing to discuss a path forward today.

Thank you.



## **MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT**

### **Int. 262**

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The Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA), which represents some 16,000 members (Actives and Retirees), strongly support Int. No. 262 In relation to requiring the Department of Education to provide school-level data regarding students receiving special education services.

As school leaders, we must advocate for all of our students, particularly the most vulnerable and most in need. By definition, our special education students meet these criteria.

These students are guided by an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) that specifically mandates which services best meet the student's needs. In too many cases, our students have not been receiving these vital and required services. Oftentimes, the reason is "lack of certified staff." These excuses can no longer be tolerated and must be addressed. The DOE must take the initiative to immediately provide funding and training in all areas that are indicated by the data to enable students to receive these critical services cited in their IEP.

Therefore, by requiring that the DOE provide this data, the Council has oversight authority that can and should monitor why students are not receiving these mandated services.

**TESTIMONY**

**NYC COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
CHAIRMAN, Mark Treyger**

*Oversight – Community Schools and Renewal Schools*

**Presented on  
Tuesday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018**



**The Council of School Supervisors and Administrators  
Mark Cannizzaro, President  
Henry Rubio, Executive Vice President  
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## NYC Council Education Hearing

### Oversight – Community Schools and Renewal Schools

I am Henry Rubio, Executive Vice President of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA). We serve 6000+ principals, assistant principals, Education Administrators, Supervisors of and Day Care Directors. I would like to take a moment to commend newly elected City Council Education Committee Chair Mark Treyger and distinguished members of the City Council for scheduling this important hearing. On behalf of CSA, I thank you for the opportunity to present testimony concerning Community Schools and Renewal Schools.

CSA would like to first acknowledge and applaud Mayor De Blasio and Chancellor Fariña for providing additional resources to schools in need. These additional resources help to rebuild and transform specific schools through the DOE's School Renewal Program. For example, all renewal schools have an hour of their instructional day extended and are currently funded at 100% of the Fair Student Funding Formula.

While CSA believes that all schools must be funded at 100%, we are pleased that Renewal Schools are receiving the funding that the DOE determined is required to provide a sound and basic education. We strongly believe high quality, community-based organizations (CBOs) have the potential to provide an educational experience customized for each student, along with comprehensive services that promote physical health, mental well-being and address the after-school needs of their families.

In order for CBOs to be successful, School Principals and their school leadership teams must play an important role in all of the above. No one is better equipped than a Principal to guide and evaluate organizational partners. Currently, it is unclear what, if any, role Principals play in evaluating and, when necessary, replacing CBOs in community schools.

The DOE and Superintendents carefully choose and vet Principals, especially those prioritized to lead community and renewal schools. As a result, Principals must be trusted to be the decision makers. This should include supervision and selection of CBOs, as well as assurance that Field Support Center personnel and Directors of School Renewal are laser focused on agreed upon goals.

In situations where it has not been made clear that CBOs are accountable to school leaders and leadership teams, the School Renewal Program has not been as successful as it otherwise might have been. CSA has consistently taken the position that school leaders are best suited to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of their particular CBO and we reiterate that stance today. Plausible data must be gathered and analyzed, and rubrics must be established to determine if community-based organizations are contributing to student achievement, attendance, and other agreed upon goals.

As school leaders we recognize and support the need for oversight and supervision, however, there are too many people providing sometimes inconsistent direction. We believe strongly that supervision must be streamlined, focused on goals, and must be the responsibility of the Superintendent.

In addition, time-consuming paperwork and Quality Reviews that have a far broader focus and add little, if any, value have been tacked onto well thought out and previously defined goals. These additional measures are counter-productive as they unnecessarily pull school leaders away from the task of improving teaching and learning.

When Principals do request support staff at Renewal Schools, the expectation is that the additional support will assist the Principal in meeting the collective goals established, with no additional agendas. During the summer of 2015, CSA and the DOE agreed on placing Ambassador Assistant Principals in Renewal Schools. These “ambassadors” would be educators who would introduce and implement best practices from their own schools. To date, only a few ambassadors have been placed in renewal schools. Our hope and expectation is that more ambassadors will be placed in schools.

We have no doubt that the Mayor and Chancellor and all members of our school communities are committed to working collaboratively to continue making Community and Renewal Schools a success. We believe that CSA has the same goals as the DOE, and that our input is both valued and respected.

Although we have identified some missteps in the Renewal School model, we have come a long way since the initial roll out. Over the last couple of years, we’ve seen successful schools where Principals were supported by a team of professionals who were all steering in the same direction, one that is led by the Principal and leadership team.

We firmly believe that our collaborative efforts will yield positive results for all students and we look forward to future success.

Sincerely,

Henry Rubio



Testimony of the  
United Federation of Teachers

By Karen Alford, Vice President for Elementary Schools

Before the New York City Council Committee on Education  
Regarding Oversight of Community Schools and Renewal Schools  
and Intro 262 — A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation  
to requiring the Department of Education to provide school-level data regarding students receiving  
special education services

February 27, 2018

Good morning. My name is Karen Alford, and I am the United Federation of Teachers' vice president for elementary schools. On behalf of the union's 185,000 members, I would like to thank Chairman Mark Treyger and the Committee on Education for holding today's hearing.

First, we congratulate you on assuming the leadership of the Education Committee. As a former classroom teacher, we know your experience will serve you well as you seek to make a difference in the lives of our 1.1 million public school children.

We deeply appreciate the City Council's support for the UFT's Community Learning Schools Initiative, as demonstrated by your generous appropriations in the city's expense budget and by individual council members, who through their discretionary budgets, fund CLS projects in their districts. We must also acknowledge that when we launched CLS in 2012, the New York City Council was one of the three anchor funders.

Chairman Treyger, we always value your committee's call for greater accountability from the Department of Education. We therefore welcome your oversight of New York City's community school models — particularly with an emphasis on the UFT's signature community learning schools — and its best practices. We also recognize the importance of reviewing the challenges and opportunities facing schools in the city's renewal school initiative. Finally, as your committee reviews school-level data reporting for students receiving special education services, we offer support for Council member Donovan Richards' bill, Intro 262. Council member Richards has CLS schools Queens High School for Information, Research, and Technology (QIRT) and PS 52 in his district.

## **Significant challenges and opportunities facing NYC renewal schools**

As you know, the UFT strongly supports efforts to ensure that our schools which face the greatest challenges have the resources and supports they need to effectively serve their students, and the district's renewal program has seen some successes in addressing these critical needs. Like you, we want to ensure that schools meeting their growth targets do not lose the very funding and supports which have played a role in their growth, especially since the schools in the program consistently enroll a higher proportion of students with high needs than the average district school.

When a skillful principal brings the staff together to work collaboratively, the students perform better and the schools experience greater success. The renewal program needs improvement; that's not in dispute. These school communities deserve effective leadership, as well as on-going support and resources so all students receive a quality education.

## **Community schools models, a distinction and a difference**

What makes our UFT community learning schools stand apart? It's three-fold. First, it's the level and the quality of the support we provide to help make the schools self-sufficient. Without relying on the DOE school-based budgets, our support enables schools in the CLS initiative to withstand political and funding fluctuations and sustain their programs. Second, we emphasize the effectiveness and the impact of CLS services and interventions. For instance we make sure that the sign-ups for our school-based health clinics meet a high percentage of the students. In our role as community school directors and program managers rather than select the services for the school teams, we help them maximize the effectiveness — so students and families get the right supports from the right staffers. Finally, we provide the ongoing professional learning and system support for the advisory boards and school teams that ultimately reinforces their strong programming and sound decision making.

Many approaches are labeled community schools and the common denominator typically centers on wrap-around services, although not exclusively, to students in high poverty district schools. We understand the confusion in our own city where the DOE has designated the schools in its renewal program as community schools; yet, the model is distinct from the UFT's 29-school CLS initiative. For instance, the school selection process: the administration targeted persistently low-performing schools, prescribing a model where programs and services are delivered by a single anchor community-based organization (CBO) embedded in the school building, led by a director who manages the resources. In the UFT model, our schools self-select for the CLS designation, voluntarily entering a multi-layered application and vetting process.

We're not here to compare our approaches. After all, our union has long maintained the position that one-size does not fit all. We came to champion what we believe works well in many, but not all schools and to illustrate the best practices from our initiative that are removing barriers to learning and helping our students achieve at higher levels. Equally important, while our schools weren't chosen based on a performance threshold please know our CLS team walks into some challenging school environments. These schools serve some of the highest needs students. Yet, our union's CLS schools are improving faster than the city's district schools, even though they have more students in poverty, more English language learners and more students with disabilities.

## **Understanding our UFT community learning school model centered on collaboration and professional support**

Collaborative school communities that give voice to educators, parents and community members together with the school administration exemplify our community learning schools. This takes shape in a number of ways. In our model, the community school director (CSD) serves as the key point person responsible for integrating the programs and services and managing the partnerships within each community learning school. CSDs annually conduct a needs assessment, with the aim of strategically aligning programs and services to meet the particular needs of their school community. While the central CLS team vets candidates for these positions, each school team interviews and selects its own CSD, reinforcing an authentic school-based point of view.

Each school forms its own advisory board of internal and external stakeholders to serve as the decision-making body for the CLS initiative. The advisory board crafts the school's vision and is accountable for executing that plan.

Consistency throughout the implementation of the community school model is a crucial element for the model's success. The UFT adds significant value by ensuring with each cohort that we've added that there's consistency and fidelity to the CLS implementation. The UFT's support also brings additional resources, mentoring and best practices to these schools. Nine of our CLS schools have UFT Teacher Centers operating in their buildings, to provide quality, on-site, relevant professional development. Our CLS central support staff helps schools build internal capacity to turn their vision into reality. Two of the CLS central support staff are credentialed Teacher Center staff developers available to help all 29 schools.

## **Whole child education in action**

Our schools face pervasive challenges, but our holistic approach to children and community sets the stage for them to thrive. When I speak of two community learning schools from our first cohort in the 2012-13 school year, Coney Island's PS 188 and Community Health Academy of the Heights — commonly known as CHAH — Chairman Treyger and Council member Mark Levine can bear witness to our work. I can call out Ozone Park's PS 65 and the International School for Liberal Arts in Kingsbridge — commonly known as ISLA — from our second cohort in the 2013-14 school year, and Council members Erich Ulrich and Andrew Cohen know first-hand how CLS has made a mark. Or we can look at Staten Island's Curtis High School and the Gotham Professional Arts Academy in Bedford-Stuyvesant, where Council members Debi Rose and Alicka Ampy-Samuel can attest to the programs and services making a difference for children and families.

Through public and private partnerships, the Community Learning Schools Initiative transforms a school building into a true community hub. From an initial, as well as on-going assessment of the needs, we align programs and services from six core pillars: health and wellness; educator support; academic support; expanded learning time; parent and family engagement and community engagement. Through these sustainable programs and services, our CLS model seeks to remove the barriers to learning while nurturing the whole child physically, emotionally and mentally. Again, let me underscore the critical role that our CSDs play in bringing the concept to life daily in the fabric of each school.

As a professional union engaged in this work, we have a unique proposition. Let me share some examples where our CLS public-private-union partnerships are making a difference.

### PS 188 – Coney Island

Children from the high poverty neighborhoods surrounding Coney Island’s PS 188 faced a number of challenges when the school joined our first CLS cohort in the 2012-13 school year— worsened by Hurricane Sandy. The health and wellness barriers to learning quickly emerged as a top priority. Early collaboration with the Helen Keller International Child Sight Program provided glasses to children. Now PS 188 boasts a school-based health center and will soon feature a state-of-the-art vision center, thanks to collaboration between the Lutheran Family Health Center, OneSight (the foundation affiliated with Luxotica-LensCrafters), the School Construction Authority, the Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, and of course with the support of Chairman Treyger. Its UFT Teacher Center helps our members devise strategies that help them to enhance instruction, and the UFT – DOE restorative justice partnership, the Professional Learning Collaborative, trains every staff member in the building, reducing behavior incidents and improving school climate.

### Community Health Academy of the Heights (CHAH) – Washington Heights

CHAH, a school founded by healthcare, education and community partners for the overall health of its school community and to facilitate healthcare careers for its students, would naturally seek ways to enhance mental wellness. What followed demonstrates the power of comprehensive need assessments, a central aspect of the CLS model. School social worker, Kenia Jeanniton secured interns from graduate-level social work programs, enabling the school to screen all students in September. Plus, Jeanniton created an algorithm to use as a barometer of student mental wellness. So, in her words, “By December we know how to help and by the end of the school year, they’re healthier.” We’re replicating this approach in four CLS schools and in East Harlem’s PS 30, where we’re paying an intern (without any impact to the school budget) to deliver socio-emotional supports to at-risk students.

### International School for Liberal Arts (ISLA) - Kingsbridge

ISLA, a 6-12 school in the Bronx, has achieved success with student populations too often left behind. The school has the highest combination in New York City of English language learners, special education students and children living in temporary housing, yet its students are graduating high school at a rate 25 percentage points higher than comparable school and at rates higher than New York City as a whole. A consummate relationship builder, ISLA’s community school director has, in just the past two years, successfully leveraged nearly \$770,000 in public and non-profit grants and services. These services range from its food pantry, to technology upgrades, to a SAVE room, library restoration, coats and holiday gifts for families in temporary housing, and much more. The UFT’s community school directors build the connections between schools and elected officials, government agencies and others with available grants and in-kind services. The UFT invests approximately \$100,000 in salary and benefits in each of its community school directors, who in turn, on average bring in \$600,000 worth of programs and services to their school community.

## PS 59 – Bedford-Stuyvesant

Some of our schools joined the initiative in the past school year. But their stories demonstrate what we've learned and how we've grown since launching the CLS initiative. We designed an orientation process so new community school directors shadow at least two experienced directors, including sitting in on advisory board meetings. While relatively new, the community school director at PS 59 marshalled her school team to participate in an intensive three-day comprehensive school improvement institute sponsored by our national union, the American Federation of Teachers. Part of that training included learning how to implement restorative practices and thereby improve school culture, plus how to better use school data to ensure services match student needs, and then using that understanding to design professional learning to boost student achievement.

### **Making gains over time**

What the data bears out and what we know anecdotally is that over time, with sustained implementation of our CLS model, these schools make gains in academic achievement. The majority of elementary and middle schools in each cohort started their membership in CLS at a lower baseline of proficiency in English language arts (ELA) and math than for the city as a whole, and for comparison groups of students. In some cases, such as CHAH and PS 18 in the Bronx, the levels of proficiency, beginning in their first year as community learning schools, were substantially below the average for city as a whole. Most community learning schools have subsequently improved in ELA and math performance. Gains in ELA in particular are greatest in those schools that have been in CLS for the longest.

Educators seek to decrease the number of students at the lowest proficiency levels and likewise increase the number of students at higher proficiency levels. We're moving in the right direction. CLS schools in the first two cohorts have made the strongest gains, outpacing the city district schools, particularly in ELA. In math the gains are more in line with district schools citywide, but CLS gains from the first two cohorts of schools are stronger. However, math achievement remains a stubborn proficiency issue for many schools across the city. At CLS we will seek to fine-tune our academic support to help boost achievement.

In 2017, researchers from the Learning Policy Institute in Palo Alto, California undertook a comprehensive review of the evidence on how community school models impact student outcomes. They reviewed over 140 studies of the components of a variety of community school models. While our CLS model was not specifically included, it compressed our six pillars into four essentially covering the same complement of programs and services.<sup>1</sup> It concluded that:

*"...well-implemented community schools lead to improvement in student and school outcomes and contribute to meeting the educational needs of low-achieving students in high-poverty schools. Ample evidence is available to inform and guide policymakers, educators, and advocates interested in advancing community schools, and sufficient research exists to meet the ESSA standard for an evidence-based intervention."*

## How the City Council Can Help

As mentioned in our opening, the New York City Council helped establish our New York City Community Learning Schools Initiative as an anchor funder and we applaud and thank you for your annual support.

Our union leadership, together with its political action team, CLS community school directors, social workers and advocates, have diligently lobbied at the state level to ensure continued funding. As we prepare for the financial impact from the federal government's new tax policies and the U.S. Department of Education's proposed cuts, your support for protecting public schools and the Community Learning Schools Initiative energizes our efforts and means so much.

While we work toward achieving innovative revenue generation solutions from the state budget, we seek your consideration and support for the following recommendations:

- a) Collecting and analyzing data on the academic, socio-emotional and enrichment supports makes a critical difference in fine-tuning supports and interventions at community schools. Currently, our schools utilize many different data systems, which are not always compatible.

Urge the DOE to ensure that every community learning school, rise and renewal school align data collection systems to account for relevant data for community school programs and services, including those provided by partners and community-based organizations.

- b) Challenge the DOE to systemize parental consent for student-level data collection, enabling both internal and external evaluation of the CLS initiative.
- c) Encourage the DOE to maintain its supports for the schools emerging from the renewal school programs designated as rise schools. Incremental gains are real and recognizing the true challenges with adequate resources and supports remains essential.

## Closing thoughts

The union's Community Learning Schools Initiative addresses barriers to learning so our students, many of whom face the highest need, achieve academic and socio-emotional success. We educate the whole child. This integration of classroom instruction, services delivery, intervention and enrichment programs, together with family and community engagement, all operating seamlessly has proven to be both challenging and successful. Our vision for community learning schools emerges in the space where the day begins with breakfast even before the first a.m. bell rings and ends when the last program and services exit the building for the night.

This customized approach enhances instruction, lifting academic achievement and transforming school culture. If we want to address the needs, we must first properly identify them. It takes commitment and leadership. It takes consistency. It requires quality vetting and ongoing fine-tuning. Collaboration is not a feel good concept on paper — it must genuinely come to life among

the educators and partners. Additionally, well-resourced and well-supported professional learning reinforce higher-quality instruction.

We believe in this work. We know you do, too. Thank you for listening. More importantly, thank you for helping.

<sup>1</sup> Maier, A., Daniel, J., Oakes, J., & Lam, L. (2017). *Community schools as an effective school improvement strategy: A review of the evidence*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.



## COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 3

154 West 93<sup>rd</sup> Street New York, New York 10025 - Room 204 Tel (212) 678-2782 Fax (212) 678-2804 Email: [CEC3@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CEC3@schools.nyc.gov)

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Council Members: Inyanga Collins   Daniel Katz   Michael McCarthy   Jean Moreland   |   Ilene Altschul  
Dennis Morgan   Jane Yan Sun, ELL   Alana Metcalf, Student Member   |   District 3 Community Superintendent

February 27, 2018

Mark Treyger  
Education Committee  
New York City Council

Please accept this letter to Chancellor Farina from January 22, 2018 as testimony to your hearing on "Community Schools and Renewal Schools" and Int. 262.

Portions of this letter pertain to the school specific data researched and compiled by CEC3 regarding resources allocated to Wadleigh Secondary during its involvement in the Renewal School program, the benchmarks cited for its continuance in the program, and the current DOE proposal to penalize the school for reasons that run contrary to the performance metrics cited.

Thank you for allowing us to speak on behalf of the members of the District 3 community.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Watkins  
CEC3 President



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Dennis Morgan Jane Yan Sun, ELL Alana Metcalf, Student Member District 3 Community Superintendent

January 22, 2018

Chancellor Carmen Fariña  
New York City Department of Education  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10001

Dear Chancellor Fariña,

Closing a beloved community school, or any portion of such school in one of New York City's neighborhoods is never an easy process. It shouldn't be an easy process. In the Harlem portion of Community School District 3, where Success Academy Charter Schools and other charters have bought their way into their "market share" via snazzy advertising, rigidity of behavioral standards, crisp uniforms and other optical illusions, public schools are fighting hard to survive. The Wadleigh Secondary School for The Performing Visual Arts is no exception.

Like other schools in the Department of Education's renewal school program, Wadleigh has struggled academically. Yet according to the renewal school benchmark portal, the Wadleigh middle school has met most of its markers for performance these last three years. Student attendance improved to 91.8%, within the benchmark range of 91.4-92.4%. Collaborative teaching marks reached 3.03, which meets the range set at 3.0-3.3. ELA proficiencies were also met according to the portal. Of the six benchmarks listed on the portal, Wadleigh met four of them, 67%, which is exactly the achievement level referenced by Superintendent Altschul as the required progress to remain in the renewal school program.

While the announcement to truncate its middle school and make Wadleigh a competitive performing arts high school appeals to decision makers at the New York City Department of Education, the District 3 superintendent, and a handful of elected officials, this decision does not represent the best interests of the Harlem community, parents at Wadleigh, and Community Education Council District 3.

For the additional reasons listed below and the unanswered questions attached, CEC3 calls on the Department of Education to immediately suspend this proposal for consideration for at least one year so that Wadleigh can continue to work towards improving academic standards and enrollment at the school, so that the Wadleigh community and Harlem parents can begin to heal, and so that CEC3 can work on building trust with the parents of our district who need the most support.

First, holding a secret meeting with a handful of chosen parents, asking them to keep the conversation to themselves, then referencing this contact point as engagement is NOT "community engagement." However, this is exactly the type of behavior that is all too common among school communities in District 3 where segregation and charter encroachment remains most persistent.

Everyone involved in the decision to add the Wadleigh middle school to the list of closures knows that community engagement did not occur before the proposal announcement. In June, the District 3 superintendent met one time with the Wadleigh SLT. According to parents in the room, she noted that the

closure was “just an idea.” From that meeting in June until late October, the “idea” of truncating the middle school was not mentioned to the Wadleigh community nor to members of CEC3. In the fall, frustrated parents, who were hearing rumors of a truncation, took it upon themselves to set up a meeting with the District 3 renewal schools representative. Much effort was spent trying to prevent a CEC liaison from attending this meeting (November 10) and, during the meeting, district staff professed to know nothing of the rumors of the truncation.

Moreover, during multiple CEC3 meetings in the fall, the District 3 superintendent indicated that the Wadleigh middle school might be considered for truncation for 2019, but that no such significant change proposal was imminent. And on December 18, 2017, in a meeting with the Wadleigh middle school students - not their parents - the truth was revealed. The Wadleigh community has been told that the District 3 superintendent fought the decision. Clearly she did not fight very hard. [In fact, at a recent CEC3 meeting, the District 3 superintendent voiced her support for the truncation.]

Second, there is clear evidence that Wadleigh IS improving, as per the benchmark metrics described at the beginning of this letter. Other performance outcomes are notable as well, despite the fact that the Department of Education failed to provide much needed substantive resources that would improve student outcomes. Following this letter is a table of unanswered questions that highlight such student outcomes, accountability and oversight, as well as a financial summary of Wadleigh’s funding.

Lastly, on Friday, January 12, 2018, an additional injustice was handed to the hard-working Wadleigh community, which is trying to save the middle school. The Department of Education has decided to delay the truncation vote of the Panel for Education Policy until the March 21 meeting. This untimely delay means that the Wadleigh community will be cast into further confusion about its future. Such a decision to delay the vote, means that, among other things, the already scheduled and promoted Joint Public Hearing won’t take place on February 12<sup>th</sup>, curtailing the momentum and passion so clearly on display at the meeting on January 10<sup>th</sup>. In addition, yet another month will pass for students and parents to figure out where they will be going to school next year. This delay is unacceptable, disrespectful, destructive, and abusive.

Before this course of engagement causes any more damage to the Harlem community, CEC3 calls upon the Department of Education to suspend, for at least one year, the plans to truncate the Wadleigh middle school and to work closely with CEC3 and the Wadleigh community to develop a plan for the Wadleigh Secondary School for Performing Visual Arts to “rise up” from the Renewal School program. Changes in leadership and programming may be needed, and we welcome the effort to bring in outside entities for assistance. However, this is NOT the time to amputate a major source of enrollment for the high school. Cultivating a performing arts high school at Wadleigh is already underway - let’s work together to make it happen.

Sincerely,

Community Education Council 3

CC: Mayor Bill DeBlasio  
U.S. Congressman Adriano Espaillat  
Commissioner MaryEllen Elia, New York State Education Department  
Regents Chancellor Betty A. Rosa  
Regents Vice Chancellor T. Andrew Brown  
Regent Nan E. Mead  
Regent Kathleen M. Cashin  
Regent Wade S. Norwood  
Regent Christine D. Cea  
Regent Lester Young, Jr  
Regent Elizabeth Hakanson  
Regent Luis Reyes  
Regent Josephine Victoria Finn  
Regent Roget Tilles

Regent James R. Tallon, Jr.  
Regent Beverly Ouderkirk  
Regent Judith Johnson  
Regent Catherine Collins  
Regent James E. Cottrell  
Regent Judith Chin  
New York State Senator Brian Benjamin  
New York State Assembly Member Inez E. Dickens  
Public Advocate Letitia James  
NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer  
Borough President Gale A. Brewer  
City Council Member Bill Perkins  
City Council Member Mark Trayger  
Dr. Hazel Dukes, NAACP New York President  
Michael Mulgrew, United Federation of Teachers  
District 3 Superintendent Ilene Altschul  
Daisy Fontanez, Principal, Wadleigh Secondary School of Performing Visual Arts  
Gigs Taylor-Stephenson, President, Wadleigh Parent Association  
Vanessa Leung, Panel for Educational Policy  
Michael Kraft, Panel for Educational Policy  
Lori Podvesker, Panel for Educational Policy  
Peter Calandrella, Panel for Educational Policy  
Isaac Carmignani, Panel for Educational Policy  
Geneal Chacon, Panel for Educational Policy  
April Chapman, Panel for Educational Policy  
T. Elzora Cleveland, Panel for Educational Policy  
Deborah Dillingham, Panel for Educational Policy  
Gary Linnen, Panel for Educational Policy  
Stephanie Soto, Panel for Educational Policy  
Ben Shuldiner, Panel for Educational Policy  
D. Miguelina Zorilla-Aristy, Panel for Educational Policy

### Unanswered Questions about Wadleigh and the Closure of Its Middle School Grades

Note: this list has been accumulating since December 18, 2017 with NO response from the Superintendent other than to reference that "central" is planning to create an FAQ. The left column refers to general topic areas: DOE Accountability, Wadleigh resources, student outcomes, enrollment, truncation announcement, transition plan, and community engagement.

Type	Question/Concern
DOE Accountability	Who is responsible for the student outcome improvements on tests? State test scores denote 0 proficient, yet according to the 2016-17 Quality Review, 86% have passing grades in their core subjects. Their "comparison group" ranks with 82% Per the QR, the "Comparison Group" is made up of students from other schools across the city who were the most similar to the students at this school, based on their incoming test scores, disability status, English Language Learner status, economic need, and over-age status How can this be explained?
DOE Accountability	At the Jan 17, 2018 District Leadership Team meeting, Superintendent Altschul announced that Renewal Schools need to meet 67% of their benchmarks. When asked for more detail about this, she explained that they must meet FOUR of their SIX benchmarks. The Wadleigh middle school met this standard and PS149 (the other Renewal School in District 3) did NOT. Why is Wadleigh being punished but PS149 gets another year to improve?
DOE Accountability	The Renewal School website includes a list of FIVE Key Elements of the Plan, the fifth stating that the program is, "bringing increased oversight and accountability including strict goals and clear consequences for schools that do not meet them." Where, when and how were the consequences conveyed to members of the Wadleigh community? They had NOT been conveyed to the CEC3 until a discussion at the Jan 17, 2018 CEC3 meeting about reaching 67% of benchmarks.
DOE Accountability	After learning about the existence of the benchmark pages for Renewal Schools, CEC3 asked Wadleigh PTA President if these data had been shared with her, and they had not. Why does the Wadleigh community NOT have information related to their student performance outcomes and consequences?
DOE Accountability	According to the truncation announcement, the DOE is truncating the middle school at Wadleigh because of its low math test scores. However, there is NO benchmark associated with math performance. In addition, there are NO math funding allocations. If the closure is derived from math data, why was this school not given a math marker and why no funds for math performance?
DOE Accountability	Who will explain the inappropriate behavior or breaches of protocol by DOE employees. We heard first-hand accounts of families who had been told at the Enrollment Center that they should not enroll in Wadleigh because it was a "bad" or "terrible" school. These are families that persisted, and enrolled their children despite the deliberate attempt to discourage them. How many did NOT choose to enroll when they realized the DOE did not support this school? Whether this employee did this on his own, or was directed by someone else. It should disqualify "low enrollment" as a reason for closing the school, especially given the fact that a DOE employee was disciplined for this behavior.
DOE Accountability	When was Wadleigh leadership notified that Wadleigh MS might be truncated and what metrics was DOE using to evaluate the truncation?

DOE Accountability	The expansion of Success Academy Harlem 4 will allow it to expand to high school grades. Of course they want to remain in the building that they share with Wadleigh. What assurances will the DOE offer that this will not happen?
DOE Accountability	Can the District 3 Office move to Harlem/Wadleigh? so that Harlem schools be given the level of attention that they need to make substantial improvements in the next five years.
DOE Accountability	A lot of questions have arisen in looking at Wadleigh funding and expenses since joining the Renewal Schools program (see Wadleigh Resources questions below). Who should be held accountable for decisions made or not made at this school?
DOE Accountability	Both Assistant Principals resigned after the 2015-2016 year, and the entire math department resigned after the 2015-2016 year. What information can be given about these incidents?
Wadleigh Resources	Why did Wadleigh not hire a full time librarian after it's long-time librarian retired?
Wadleigh Resources	What happened to the math team for the middle school that caused them to all leave the school at the end of the 2015-16 year?
Wadleigh Resources	What is the difference between a math teacher and a math coach?
Wadleigh Resources	In FY's 2015-2017, there appear to be 5 math (4 gen ed and 1 ICT) teachers but it is not clear how many teach middle school grades. How many service 6-8 grade?
Wadleigh Resources	The Galaxy funding reports detail NO Renewal School funding for math coaching. Please explain in detail who was hired to help middle schoolers in math and how many hours they spent at the school each week last school year.
Wadleigh Resources	Do coaches refer to persons that were working directly with students, or to professional development for teachers? Please document who they were, the time periods and hours they were in place. Since the renewal plan is for 3 years, please reference dates where personnel, courses, or interventions were taken over these three years in order to move math proficiency in the right direction. In previous meetings, parents have expressed that there was NOT consistency of instruction in the math department, and that almost the entire department left at one point. Hiring one "master math instructor", no matter how wonderful they are, cannot count as a consistent 3-year plan to bring up math scores. Since a major reason for truncation is the lack of proficiency shown in math and English scores, it is extremely important to make all the renewal measures public, in detail.
Wadleigh Resources	Wadleigh expenses show alterations in the leadership structure that include the loss of one Assistant Principal from FY 2015 to 2016 and the addition of a Principal salary in FY 2017. Is there a second Principal? If so, who is this person?
Wadleigh Resources	Wadleigh employed a dean and a parent coordinator as late as FY 2015 but the dean position has not been filled since that year. Why?
Wadleigh Resources	Wadleigh expenses show 6 teachers employed in the math department for FY's 2015, 2016, and 2017 with an increase to 10 members of this team for FY 2018. Why did this staffing increase not happen earlier if math performance was a high priority?
Wadleigh Resources	Wadleigh's OTPS (operational) expenses ballooned from \$264K in FY 2015 to \$558K in FY2017, a 110% increase. With a dwindling enrollment, why did basic expenses increase so much?
Renewal School Funding	D3 Budget rep Matthew Manner attended the October 25, 2017 meeting and presented that Renewal Schools receive the majority of Contract for Excellence Funds. However, in D3, approx 10% of district funds were sent to our two renewal schools. Why is this?

Renewal School Funding	On the budget information that follows, renewal funding lines are bolded. These line items need to be explained in detail as to how they relate to specific goals for achievement in math, English and other areas. For example, one of the bold line items reads "RS IEP Para". Our understanding is that a Para is assigned due to IEP requirements for a particular child, and funding for that service is mandated by the special education reform laws. If a Para is part of an IEP, it would be funded whether or not this school is in Renewal Status--how is any student's Para counted as renewal funding?
Student Outcomes	Wadleigh was announced as successfully coming off of the NYSED Priority List for academic performance. Coupled with its 86% passing Core Courses standard, it seems that Wadleigh is making improvements, so why punish it now?
Student Outcomes	How many students who graduated from Wadleigh to attend college. Is there anyway to show a correlation between the students who graduated from Wadleigh middle school and high school who then went on to college. When are students turning their grades around to get into college. Is it possible that some of the students are benefiting from the smaller learning community and the difference in results is not recognized until they are in high school?
Student Outcomes	According to NYSED, Wadleigh 8th grader performance on the state science tests include 0% level 1's, 33% level 2's, 67% level 3's and 0% level 4's. Why is this data not highlighted as a success story for the school? The DOE story about the middle school has cruelly subjected children to accusations of stupidity because of their math test scores, when clearly they can achieve.
Enrollment	In June 2017, the parent coordinator confirmed that there were 57 incoming 6th graders. The final class number settled at 37 students and multiple students indicated that they were steered to other schools. Why?
Enrollment	Despite the known information that students interested in Wadleigh were steered away from Wadleigh, the current 6th grade class represents an increase from the 2016-17 year of 85% growth. How is this not an applicable variable for allowing Wadleigh to keep moving forward?
Enrollment	If truncations, mergers and closures are based on enrollment numbers why has the DOE not assisted the school with marketing?
Enrollment	The DOE expressed interest in Wadleigh growing as a high school, but middle school grades feed the school. How else would the high school grow when the DOE doesn't help promote any school?
Enrollment	Superintendent indicated to CEC members that Wadleigh 6th graders do not audition. Based on the comments from the 6th graders at the community meeting, auditions are definitely held. In fact, auditions are a major part of their recruiting experience. Why does the Superintendent not know this?
Enrollment	At the CEC3 meeting on Jan 17, 2018, Superintendent Altschul publicly acknowledged that a DOE employee was "disciplined" for deliberately steering students away from Wadleigh. Why was the DOE not trying to bolster Wadleigh's enrollment, especially given the importance that enrollment played in the decision to close the middle school?
Truncation Announcement	According to the Superintendent, the DOE instructed her to wait until the day of the announcement, Dec 18, to inform CEC3 and parents at Wadleigh. The Principal was informed the day before, and the Superintendent was informed on Dec 13. Students were informed first. A letter was sent home and phone calls were made to parents at night on Dec 18. The SLT was NOT informed ahead of the announcement.

Truncation Announcement	Why did the PEP decision get pushed to March 21, just a few weeks from middle school acceptance letters going out? What information has been provided to the Wadleigh community about this PEP delay? When will the new public hearing be scheduled?
Truncation Announcement	Parents, parent leaders and the community all agree that the children should NOT have been notified first "because they could read the letter that was being sent home". A letter could have been mailed home with the proposal and a meeting date for parent questions. SLT and PTA leaders could have been contacted to determine the best way to inform parents first, and then children. Both of these items bring the professionalism and protocol of DOE employees into question, should warrant a shakeup and investigation, and should disqualify this proposal from a vote. The DOE needs to be accountable to those it is supposed to serve.
Transition Plan	Where would the current 6th and 7th graders go if the PEP votes to truncate the school?
Transition Plan	What specific resources will students at Wadleigh receive between now and August so when they begin at the new school, they succeed?
Community Engagement	How many times did the Superintendent visit Wadleigh during the years of the Renewal Program? What happens during these visits? Is a report submitted to the Renewal Schools office and/or the Superintendent's supervisor? If so, how can we see these reports?
Community Engagement	An SLT member reported at the 1/10 meeting that the Superintendent attended a meeting in June to discuss the middle school truncation. This meeting was NOT attended by a CEC3 member nor reported to the council. Why? What exactly was discussed at this meeting? Why were the attendees asked to keep this part of the discussion secret?
Community Engagement	At the PS185/208 community meeting, the Superintendent indicated the "community meeting" was for questions only. It was explained that the difference is that the community meeting is where questions were asked and that a hearing is when public comment was offered. Some PS208 students and community members were prohibited from speaking because of this distinction. Why did the 1/10 Wadleigh community meeting format change?
Community Engagement	On Nov 13, a member of the District 3 staff sent an email with the subject: Wadleigh closure in relation to a meeting that had been called at Wadleigh on Nov 10. The CEC3 liaison attended this meeting at the request of the PTA President and District staff indicated to the parents in the room that they did not know of any plan to truncate or close Wadleigh. Why were parents misinformed?

Galaxy Funding for Wadleigh for the last four years. If nearly \$600 million was spent on fewer than 100 schools, why was Wadleigh awarded approximately \$2.2 million? Fundamental math divides \$600 million into approximately \$6 million per school over the life of the program.

Allocation Category	FY 2018	FY 2017	FY 2016	FY 2015
21st Century 62		64,532	71,198	72,095
AIDP	64,200	64,200	64,200	60,000
<b>AIDP Renewal</b>				<b>6,000</b>
Contract for Excellence FY 09 HS	202,001	202,001	202,001	202,001
TL 09 C4E CTT HS				35,869
Funds Pub Schl 30 - NYC Mentoring Program		829		
IDEA RS IEP Para	33,091	25,787	12,492	14,164
NYS STVP General Voucher				15,308
NYS STVP Software Voucher				15,130
OASAS Sub Abuse OTPS	500	500	1,500	
PSAL Snack and Bev Sponsor 80160	525			525
Priority/Focus Parent Engagement Schools			2,379	2,898
<b>SAPIS Renewal Schools</b>	<b>82,483</b>	<b>75,977</b>	<b>42,828</b>	
Self Sustaining 60			525	
Rollover TI Cor 91 PS Pch Svc Loc Trvl				13,072
Rollover TI Correct 91 Supp and Mats				900
Sequester Aid IDEA RS IEP Paras	3,536	4,355	1,335	2,833
Sequester/2010 Census Title I SWP	7,663	8,975	10,305	17,193
Title I 1003a Summer	16,979	39,036	16,979	
Title I Priority/Focus SWP	51,972	65,833	89,503	107,848

Title I Priority/Focus SWP Parent Education	14,484	17,487		
<b>Title I Renewal School Teacher Leadership</b>		<b>38,275</b>		
Title I SWP	178,513	213,682	237,894	289,814
Title I SWP Parent Involvement	1,803	2,158		
Title I SWP Translation Services	1,829	1,929	1,973	2,184
Title III LEP				11,200
TL 09 C4E CTT HS	35,541	35,643	35,711	
TL Arts Studio HS		4,000	6,000	6,000
TL Blueprint Assistance HS	294,261	281,311	282,650	313,822
TL CB Per Session Per Diem Prep				5,815
TL CFES RIS Itinerant (Partial Funding)				14,070
TL Children First Network Support HS				16,000
TL CB School Staff	37,940	26,213	23,575	
<b>TL CFES Renewal Assistant Principals</b>			<b>120,730</b>	<b>24,496</b>
TL CFES Open Schools Support Staff	43,882			
TL CFES RS Open Schools IEP Paras	20,363			
TL City Council Member Items		5,000	5,000	6,000
TL Computer Maintenance HS	17,056	12,589	9,839	10,234
TL Core Curriculum Support	143	286	1,238	114
TL Data Specialist		1,844	1,757	1,657
TL E&E Advanced Placement for All HS	29,415	7,773		

TL E&E AP for All Support HS	17,401			
TL Fair Student Funding HS	2,505,176	2,705,366	2,650,058	2,811,983
TL FSF Post-IEP Support HS		500		1,000
TL Funds Over Formula HS	137,646	166,564	166,564	166,564
TL High School Screened Arts Program	1,464	4,944	3,792	3,160
TL MOSL	1,500		1,500	1,500
TL Network Support Fees				34,000
TL NYSTL Hardware HS				4,959
TL NYC Mentoring OTPS	150	100		
TL NYC Mentoring PS	2,400	2,300		
TL NYSTL Library Books HS	1,808	2,178	2,583	3,112
TL NYSTL Software HS		2,150		4,424
TL NYSTL Textbooks HS	16,456	19,037	5,865	27,592
TL One-Time Allocations HS			164	
TL OTPS for PSAL HS	795	795	795	832
TL Parent Coordinator HS	41,792	41,579	40,402	39,792
TL Parent Coordinator OTPS HS	500	500	500	500
TL Periodic Assessment		1,500		
TL Regents Distributed Scoring				417
TL Renewal ELT HS	196,317	176,733	170,437	
TL Sabbaticals				66,185
TL SE Transitional Funding HS				45,219
TL RS IEP Para	54,752	75,662	23,397	20,330

TL RS IEP Teacher HS	84,574	80,646	75,996	74,540
TL RS Mandated Counseling Shared	56,385	74,700	79,990	85,653
TL RS Mandated Speech Shared	90,166	80,394	78,378	73,065
TL RS Occupational Therapist PS Shared	72,148	68,920	67,584	62,282
TL RS Speech Sixth Period Coverage	5,707	4,596		
TL Strong Schools Strong Communities HS	16,000	16,000	16,000	
TL Summer in the City Renewal School HS	26,558	45	8,484	
TL Summer in the City Shared	788	918		1,297
TL Temporary Shortfall 6 pd Shortage Coverage		24,848		
TL Temporary Shortfall Per Diem	37,069	30,000	30,000	
TL Temporary Shortfall Per Session-OTPS	118,138	60,000	69,000	
TL Temporary Shortfall Teachers	165,692	371,509	296,696	
TL Time and Attendance HS			875	1,531
TL Translation Services	1,074	1,133	1,151	716
TL Vision for School Improvement	19,097	19,097	18,796	
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,809,733</b>	<b>5,232,929</b>	<b>5,050,619</b>	<b>4,797,895</b>
Renewal Funding (bolded)	669,090	499,215	667,824	346,366
Renewal Funding (bolded) Total	2,182,495			



# Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

## Testimony to be delivered to the New York City Council Committee on Education

### Re: Community Schools and Renewal Schools and Int. 262

February 27, 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you. My name is Randi Levine, and I am Policy Director at Advocates for Children of New York. For more than 45 years, Advocates for Children has worked to ensure a high-quality education for New York students who face barriers to academic success, focusing on students from low-income backgrounds. We work on behalf of children who are at greatest risk for school-based discrimination or academic failure due to poverty, disability, race, ethnicity, immigrant or English Language Learner status, sexual orientation, gender identity, homelessness, or involvement in the foster care or juvenile or criminal justice systems. Every year, we help thousands of individual families navigate the New York City school system.

We would like to start by congratulating Chair Treyger on his new leadership role, as well as the new and returning members of the Education Committee. We look forward to working with you over the next four years to strengthen education throughout the City.

AFC supports the growth of community schools and our Executive Director is proud to serve on the City's Community Schools Advisory Board. Many of the students and families we serve have needs that fall outside the scope of educational programs that schools have traditionally offered. Community schools help to connect students with the health, mental health, and social services they need to be successful learners, and they recognize the important connection between family involvement and student success. Community schools provide services to the students we serve in a variety of ways, including a pilot program that the Office of Community Schools launched in the community schools with the highest numbers of students in temporary housing to connect these students with mentors, attendance support, food and clothing, and social services. While it is critical for students and families to have access to the social services community schools provide, these services must go hand-in-hand with a focus on high-quality instruction and academic interventions to produce better educational outcomes for students. In addition, in the coming years, as the Administration continues its work on community schools, it will be important for the City to focus on how to sustain and expand this work so that more students will be able to benefit.

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Given our limited time today, I would like to make one key point about the renewal schools that are closing. Based on past experience, school closings can be detrimental to current students, decreasing stability and separating them from programs, services, and support they need. Our understanding is that the DOE has promised to work one-on-one with families to find new placements. The City Council can play an important role in monitoring what actually happens to students in closing schools and holding the City accountable for ensuring a thoughtful process for moving these students. Merely providing a student with a placement in a different school is insufficient. Rather, the DOE must provide schools that have the programs and services that students need. For example, if a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) mandates a 12-student special class, it is important that the DOE find a school that has a seat available in an appropriate 12-student special class and not assume that every school will be able to meet every student's IEP mandate. This is just one example; the need for a thoughtful placement process extends far beyond students with disabilities. We urge the Council to monitor this process and ensure that the DOE provides students who must leave their schools with new placements where they will have the greatest chance of school success based on their individual strengths and needs.

Finally, we support Int. 262, introduced by Council Member Richards, which would require the DOE's annual special education data report to include the number of students with IEPs in each school. We are glad to see this attention on special education so early in the new session. We also support a related bill, Int. 559, introduced by Chair Treyger, which would require the DOE to report on each school's compliance in providing students with their mandated special education services. This bill would help shine a light on schools that are succeeding in providing services to students with disabilities, as well as schools that need additional support and resources to meet the needs of students with IEPs, and would help us better target advocacy efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions.



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## Testimony of Leonie Haimson before the NYC Council Education Committee on the Renewal School Program

February 27, 2018

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to speak here today. My name is Leonie Haimson, and I'm the Executive Director of Class Size Matters, a citywide advocacy group devoted to providing information on the benefits of small class size to parents in New York City and across the country.

The Department of Education refers to the Renewal Program as a "call to action."<sup>1</sup> Action is indeed desperately needed to improve New York City's struggling schools, but the Renewal Program by and large has been a disappointment. An analysis by Aaron Pallas of Columbia University shows that Renewal Schools have not performed better than comparable non-Renewal Schools.<sup>2</sup>

Why is the Renewal program not living up to expectations? Why are many of these schools not exhibiting the improvements we need?

Reducing class size is the education intervention most strongly supported by rigorous evidence and has been shown to be particularly effective for students with disadvantaged backgrounds.<sup>3</sup> Since 2007, DOE has made special promises to the state to reduce class size in its lowest-performing schools, as part of its Contract for Excellence obligations. For the first seven years or so, this involved a list of 75 low-performing schools with especially large class sizes. Yet many of these schools never lowered class size to acceptable levels, and many are now closed.

Others have continued to struggle. Promises have been repeatedly made to these children, to parents, and to the state that were repeatedly broken. Starting in 2014, DOE has promised to focus its class size reduction efforts more specifically at the Renewal schools.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/RenewalSchools/default>

<sup>2</sup> Pallas' research is discussed here: <https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2017/09/18/in-year-three-of-new-york-citys-massive-school-turnaround-program-the-big-question-is-whats-next/>

<sup>3</sup> Institute of Education Science, [Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported by Rigorous Evidence: A User Friendly Guide](#), 2003. See also research studies at <https://www.classsizematters.org/research-and-links/> and fact sheets at <https://www.classsizematters.org/fact-sheets-on-the-benefits-of-class-size/>

*“To better align with the Chancellor’s priorities, C4E’s class size reduction plan will now focus on the 94 schools in the School Renewal Program.”<sup>4</sup>*

This hasn't happened either.

According to our analysis, in nearly half (or 42 percent) of Renewal Schools, there was no reduction in average class size from November 2014 to November 2017.<sup>5</sup> Of the schools that did not reduce class size, the average increase in class size was more than two students per class, with some schools increasing class sizes by significantly more than that.<sup>6</sup>

Even among those schools which did lower class sizes, 18 percent did so by less than one student per class on average. Not one of the Renewal schools this fall capped class size at the levels in the city’s original C4E plan, that is, 20 students per class in grades K-3, 23 students in 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades and 25 students per class in high school. Worse yet, in 73 percent of the Renewal schools, there were maximum class sizes of 30 or more.

The turnover in teaching staff has not helped either. In October of 2017, the DOE announced that at two of the Renewal Schools, Flushing High School and DeWitt Clinton High School, all teachers would have to reapply for their jobs.<sup>7</sup> That both schools are still struggling is not surprising, given that the previous year, these schools had the highest and third highest class sizes of any in the Renewal program, with classes as large as 43 students per class in science, and 39 in English respectively, according to DOE data.<sup>8</sup> Hiring inexperienced teachers and large classes are a surefire way to undermine a school’s progress and this policy reveals a profound lack of vision on behalf of this administration.

DOE had promised the state since at least 2013 to reduce class size in at least one of the Renewal schools currently planned for closure, PS 50 Vito Marcantonio in District 4, according to the city’s

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<sup>4</sup> NYC DOE Assessment 2014-2015 Contracts for Excellence Public Comment, December 30, 2014, p. 4 at: <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/AF304521-9C1E-4EA6-B694-5F9CC80487E9/175614/C4EPublicCommentAssessment20142015FINAL.pdf> This statement is repeated in every DOE proposed C4E plan since then, as posted and archived here: <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/funding/c4e/default.htm>

<sup>5</sup> The November 2014 and November 2017 Preliminary Class Size Reports are used for the data discussed in this testimony, reflecting class sizes as of Oct. 31 of each year. We do not use the Feb. reports, reflecting class sizes as of Jan. 31, since many students have been discharged or dropped out of school by that date, especially in high school. The Nov. 2014 report is posted here: [http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/data/classsize/classsize\\_2014\\_11\\_14.htm](http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/data/classsize/classsize_2014_11_14.htm) We archived the Nov. 2017 class size data, reflecting class sizes as of Oct. 31, 2017 though the DOE has now deleted that data from its website and improperly substituted Feb. 2018 data.

<sup>6</sup> For example, at the Leaders of Tomorrow, a Bronx middle school in District 11, which resulted from a merger of two struggling schools in Sept. 2016, the average class size increased from 21.1 in that year to 27.9 this fall.

The November 2016 Preliminary Class Size Report is archived at [http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/data/classsize/classsize\\_2016\\_11\\_15.htm](http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/data/classsize/classsize_2016_11_15.htm)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2017/10/19/the-entire-staffs-at-two-troubled-new-york-city-high-schools-must-reapply-for-their-jobs/>

<sup>8</sup> These data from the November 2016 Preliminary Class Size Report.

Contract for Excellence plan.<sup>9</sup> Yet the DOE never followed through. Instead, this fall, class sizes at PS 50 are 28 in 1<sup>st</sup> grade and 30 in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, which are far too large, especially for a struggling school that has 32 percent of its students with disabilities, and an 89 percent economic need index.<sup>10</sup>

In contrast, another Renewal school, PS 15 Roberto Clemente in District 1, has seen great strides and has moved off the Renewal list. This school, which the *New York Times* called the Renewal program's "best performer," reduced class sizes from an average of 18.3 students per class in November 2014 to 15.7 in November 2017, with most classes far below 20 students this fall.<sup>11</sup> According to the DOE's performance dashboard, PS 15 also demonstrated the second highest positive impact of any public elementary school in New York City in terms of achievement, when adjusted for the need level of its students.<sup>12</sup>

***Our analysis of Renewal school data reveals a significant correlation between each school's positive impact as measured by the DOE's Performance Dashboard and its average class size, at -.33, meaning the smaller the class size, the larger the school's positive effect on achievement, adjusted for the need level of its student body.***<sup>13</sup>

The Renewal Program has come at substantial cost. In 2016-2017, per-student expenditures at these schools were twice that of New York City's most elite public schools, such as Brooklyn Tech and Stuyvesant.<sup>14</sup> Yet much of the money spent on the program has been wasted. According to an investigation by the *New York Post*, millions have been spent on "instructional coaches" and "leadership coaches" making up to \$1400 dollars a day.<sup>15</sup> Many of these consultants already earn hefty six-figure pensions; and some of them, including former principals, have a history of scandal or poor performance.<sup>16</sup>

The *New York Times* estimates that the four-year cost of the program at the end of this academic year will be \$582 million.<sup>17</sup> Yet for the same amount, or \$144 million dollars a year, the city could have hired roughly 1,450 teachers (at \$100,000 dollars each), an average of more than 15 additional teachers per school to reduce class size. Simply hiring more teachers would have provided students at these schools a

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<sup>9</sup> <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/funding/c4e/ClassSizeReduction2013-14>

<sup>10</sup> This data from the DOE's performance dashboard for PS 50 here:  
[https://tools.nycenet.edu/dashboard/#dbn=04M050&report\\_type=EMS&view=City](https://tools.nycenet.edu/dashboard/#dbn=04M050&report_type=EMS&view=City)

<sup>11</sup> See <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/24/nyregion/new-york-city-schools-test-scores.html>

<sup>12</sup> [https://tools.nycenet.edu/dashboard/#dbn=01M015&report\\_type=EMS&view=City](https://tools.nycenet.edu/dashboard/#dbn=01M015&report_type=EMS&view=City)

<sup>13</sup> See appendix for details. The average class size in November 2016 of schools leaving the Renewal Program to become Rise Schools was 21.5, compared to 22.8 for Renewal Schools that will remain in the program, close, or be consolidated.

<sup>14</sup> <https://nypost.com/2017/03/05/citys-renewal-program-costs-big-bucks-but-shows-few-results/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://nypost.com/2017/03/05/citys-renewal-program-costs-big-bucks-but-shows-few-results/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://nypost.com/2017/03/07/de-blasios-questionable-school-consultants-cost-taxpayers-millions/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/26/nyregion/renewal-schools-program-progress.html>

far better chance to succeed. Instead, by closing these schools, many capable teachers will be put on the Absent Teacher Reserve, used as substitutes or roving teachers, and never assigned to a permanent class and thus available to reduce class size.

One more point: among the schools that the DOE has now proposed closing is one that is not on the Renewal list: PS 25 Eubie Blake in Brooklyn. According to the DOE's own analysis on its School Performance Dashboard, PS 25 is the second best elementary school in Brooklyn and the fourth best public elementary school in the entire city, when the need level of its students is taken into account.<sup>18</sup>

The school recently was named a Reward School by the state.<sup>19</sup> PS 25 also outperforms every charter school in terms of its positive impact on learning -- except for Success Academy Bronx 2. If it closes, the entire building will be left to Success Bed Stuy 3, which is now co-located with PS 25.

Last year, PS 25 enrolled a large percentage (31 percent) of students w/ IEPs, 10 percent with serious disabilities in self-contained classes, and its students had a high economic need index (85 percent). And yet this school has improved sharply on the state exams in recent years -- to levels substantially above the city average.

Last year, the school outperformed other elementary schools with similar populations in their proficiency on the state exams by an astonishing 21 percent in ELA and Math. Its students with IEPs in inclusion or general ed classes outperformed similar students by 47 percent in ELA and 20 percent in math. PS 25 students in self-contained classes outperformed similar students by an astonishing 53 percent and 51 percent respectively.

So why does the Chancellor want to close PS 25, given this stellar record of achievement? The DOE's Educational Impact Statement says the school is being closed "*based on low enrollment and lack of demand from students and family.*"<sup>20</sup> According to the EIS, PS 125 is serving only 94 students this year.

Yet many of the public schools in District 16 have lost enrollment, in part because of the saturation of charter schools in the district. Moreover, families in these neighborhoods are unaware that according to the DOE's analysis, the school is the second best in Brooklyn in terms of its positive impact on student achievement, and the fourth best in the entire city; if they knew this, they would likely flock to enroll their children in the school. The Chancellor could also put another preK in the school or place a 3K in the building if she wanted its enrollment to grow.

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<sup>18</sup> [https://tools.nycenet.edu/dashboard/#dbn=16K025&report\\_type=EMS&view=City](https://tools.nycenet.edu/dashboard/#dbn=16K025&report_type=EMS&view=City) The only three public elementary schools which have a greater positive impact on student achievement, out of 661 elementary schools citywide, according to the DOE, are the Walton Ave. school in the Bronx, PS 15 in Manhattan and PS 172 in District 15. One can see the impacts of all NYC schools on this spreadsheet: [https://tools.nycenet.edu/dashboard/data/dashboard/impact\\_performance.xlsx](https://tools.nycenet.edu/dashboard/data/dashboard/impact_performance.xlsx)

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.nysed.gov/news/2018/commissioner-identifies-155-high-achieving-and-high-progress-schools-reward-schools>

<sup>20</sup> [http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/AE8473F1-3A8B-4C65-9F8F-3C63C9DA32C9/220056/EISPS25closure\\_vFinal.pdf](http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/AE8473F1-3A8B-4C65-9F8F-3C63C9DA32C9/220056/EISPS25closure_vFinal.pdf)

The fact that the school is under-enrolled is also likely one of the reasons it has succeeded so brilliantly, with exceptionally small class sizes that range from 10 to 18 students per class -- the sort of class sizes and close instructional support that all high-need kids in poverty should receive. Yet the DOE has repeatedly refused to align its school capacity formula with smaller classes, despite the strong recommendations of the Blue Book Working Group, composed of teachers, DOE officials and parent leaders.<sup>21</sup>

Closing a public school which has provided its students with such a rare opportunity to succeed would be a travesty in my view. The DOE should be celebrating, emulating and expanding this school rather than closing it. Closing any of the Renewal schools without first giving them a real chance to succeed by reducing their class sizes is also unfair and fundamentally destructive, to both its students and teachers. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

*Appendix*

*Table 1- Correlation Between Renewal Schools' Average Class Sizes and School Impact*

Class Size Data	N	Pearson Correlation (R Value)	P Value
<b>November 2016 Class Size</b>	85	<b>-0.326**</b>	<b>0.002</b>
<b>February 2017 Class Size</b>	85	<b>-0.314**</b>	<b>0.003</b>

*\*\* Correlation is Significant at the .01 Level (1-tailed)*

**Data Sources:**

November 2016 Class Size Data [http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/data/classsize/classsize\\_2016\\_11\\_15.htm](http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/data/classsize/classsize_2016_11_15.htm)

February 2016 Class Size Data [http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/data/classsize/classsize\\_2017\\_2\\_15.htm](http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/schools/data/classsize/classsize_2017_2_15.htm)

DOE Dashboard with School Impact Data <https://tools.nycenet.edu/dashboard/>

2016-2017 Renewal Schools <http://teachnyc.net/assets/RenewalDirectory201617.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> See articles in Chalkbeat: <https://ny.chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2015/07/28/city-to-tweak-how-it-calculates-school-space-needs/#.VbjIDIH3arU> ; WNYC/Schoolbook: <https://www.wnyc.org/story/city-make-changes-how-it-accounts-space-schools/> ; and DNAinfo: <https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20150729/sunset-park/de-blasio-not-doing-enough-fix-school-overcrowding-critics-say>

**City Council Hearing - Oversight - Community Schools and Renewal Schools  
Testimony by Jeremy Kaplan on behalf of Phipps Neighborhoods  
February 27, 2018**

Good afternoon Council members. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Jeremy Kaplan. I am the Senior Director for Schools and Community Education at Phipps Neighborhoods. I am testifying as a representative of my organization and also as a former school teacher and community school principal with 16 years' experience working in New York City public education.

Phipps Neighborhoods works toward a New York City in which no one is caught in the cycle of poverty. Our comprehensive network of programs serves over 12,000 children, teens, and adults each year in targeted communities through educational support, career development and access to vital community resources. Phipps Neighborhoods is currently the lead Community School partner in 9 Bronx public schools, supporting approximately 3,000 students.

Because lasting change most often requires more than one service or agency, we focus on connecting our participants to the full scope of services they need, including through partnerships with other community based organizations. These services are provided in a comprehensive, integrated manner – streamlining the students' and families' experiences to minimize barriers and maximize the benefit to them.

In order to make this menu of programs and services available to children and families in our communities, it has been essential to have funding that not only directly supports the community schools, but also the funding that supports the additional services that are so critical to our participants. Phipps Neighborhoods' Community Schools leverage strong relationships with hundreds of Bronx based stakeholders including other nonprofits, local businesses, and community members. The funding provided to support the DOE's Community Schools strategy has enabled us to:

- Reduce incidents that lead to student suspension by over 80% one school year to the next at East Bronx Academy, our first community school partnership;
- Increase Parent & Family Engagement by hosting over 2000 family members at community events and connecting those families to much needed service referrals;
- Provide over 50,000 meals to families in need through our School Based Food Pantry;
- Teach over 80 adults English through DOE funded adult education classes.

We urge the City Council to continue prioritizing funds that support programs within community schools. We also urge you to thoroughly examine the timing of funding periods and contract terms, and contract restrictions associated with accessing and utilizing the various community school funding streams. Specifically, city agencies should be more flexible and work together to not only allow but also assist nonprofit organizations with leveraging multiple funding streams in order to establish and maintain comprehensive services in community schools.

Despite being one of the most diverse cities in this country, we continue to be one of the most racially segregated, with a school system steeped in funding disparities. This segregation and disparity contribute significantly to the persistent and increasing achievement gap. Community School partnerships assist public schools in beginning to address the inequities that contribute to the achievement gap for low-income students of color. Phipps Neighborhoods believes that this initiative has been one of our City's strongest efforts to combat the sizeable inequity of resources that fall so clearly along racial and economic lines. Community schools blend a variety of city and state funding streams to create a powerful and seamless experience for students and their families to combat truancy, increase student engagement, and empower them to chart their path to success through graduation and into their adult lives.

We encourage Education Committee council members to visit our community schools, speak with our students, teachers, principals, parents, and CBO partners so you can see firsthand the great impact this powerful initiative has provided our City's children. **Thank you !**

I recently co-authored a review 143 research studies of community schools as a comprehensive strategy, and the component pillars. In each area, the report synthesizes high-quality studies that use a range of research methods, drawing conclusions about the findings that warrant confidence while also pointing to areas in which the research is inconclusive.(Maier, Daniel, Oakes, & Lam, 2017)

We conclude that well-implemented community schools lead to improvement in student and school outcomes and contribute to meeting the educational needs of low-achieving students in high- poverty schools.

Specifically, our analyses produced these relevant findings:

The evidence base on community schools and their pillars justifies the use of community schools as a school improvement strategy that helps children succeed academically and prepare for full and productive lives.

The evidence base provides a strong warrant for using community schools to meet the needs of low-achieving students in high-poverty schools and to help close opportunity and achievement gaps for students from low-income families, students of color, English learners, and students with disabilities.

The integrated student supports provided by community schools are associated with positive student outcomes. Young people receiving such supports, including counseling, medical care, dental services, and transportation assistance, often show significant improvements in attendance, behavior, social functioning, and academic achievement.

Thoughtfully designed expanded learning time and opportunities provided by community schools—such as longer school days and academically rich and engaging after-school, weekend, and summer programs—are associated with positive academic and nonacademic outcomes, including improvements in student attendance, behavior, and academic achievement. Notably, the best-designed studies show the strongest positive effects.

The meaningful family and community engagement found in community schools is associated with positive student outcomes, such as reduced absenteeism, improved academic outcomes, and student reports of more positive school climates. Additionally, this engagement can increase trust among students, parents, and staff, which has positive effects on student outcomes.

The collaborative leadership, practice, and relationships found in community schools can create the conditions necessary to improve student learning and well-being, as well as improve relationships within and beyond the school walls. The development of social capital and teacher- peer learning appear to be the factors that explain the link between collaboration and better student achievement.

Comprehensive community school interventions have a positive impact, with programs in many different locations showing improvements in student outcomes, including attendance, academic achievement, high school graduation rates, and reduced racial and economic achievement gaps.

Effective implementation and sufficient exposure to services increase the success of a community schools approach, with research showing that longer operating and better implemented programs yield more positive results for students and schools. In order to see gains in student achievement, whole school reforms such as the community school strategy often need at least 5 years of high quality implementation.(Daniel, Welner, & Valladares, 2016)

Existing cost-benefit research suggests an excellent return on investment of up to \$15 in social value and economic benefits for every dollar spent on school-based wraparound services.

### **References**

- Daniel, J., Welner, K. G., & Valladares, M. R. (2016). Research-Based Expectations for Implementation of the Community Schools Initiative in New York City School Improvement is a Process, 1–9.
- Maier, A., Daniel, J., Oakes, J., & Lam, L. (2017). Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy : A Review of the Evidence Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy, (December).



We see what can be.

**Testimony of Michelle Yanche, Associate Executive Director  
DeWitt Clinton High School (Bronx)  
The Committee on Education on the subject of the Oversight - Community Schools and  
Renewal Schools**

**(February 27, 2018)**

My name is Michelle Yanche and I am the Associate Executive Director for Good Shepherd Services, a multi-service social service agency providing services to over 30,000 children and families throughout Manhattan, the Bronx and Brooklyn.

Good Shepherd Services (GSS) goes where children, youth, and families face the greatest challenges and builds on their strengths to help them gain skills for success. Good Shepherd has worked within New York City schools for four decades. During this time, we have honed our expertise in delivering impactful services. We have established long-term embedded partnerships within schools and communities, successful work-readiness and internship opportunities for youth, and high-traction educational pathways for off-track students, getting them back on the path to high school completion. To achieve impact, Good Shepherd programs apply a Youth and Family Development approach to work on multiple levels within a school community. Our programs address individual student needs and partner with students, school staff, partner organizations and families on school-wide efforts. Good Shepherd also implements what is known as a “primary person approach” in our school-based work, understanding the importance of a caring and nurturing adult through which students are able to obtain support, guidance and an enhanced sense of self-efficacy.

Good Shepherd currently operates seven Community Schools throughout the Bronx and Brooklyn including JHS 292 (Brooklyn), Boys & Girls High School (Brooklyn), DeWitt Clinton High School (Bronx), P.S. 246 (Bronx), Felicia Rincon High School (Bronx), Bushwick Leaders High School (Brooklyn) and P.S. 297 (Brooklyn).

Our community schools have demonstrated clear gains in attendance and academic progress and some of the achieved results include:

- More Graduates: Boys and Girls and Dewitt Clinton both saw higher graduation rates last year (+5.2% pts and 2.2% pts respectively). Prior to our partnership at Bushwick Leaders

High School, the school graduation rate was 49% (2010-2011). In the 2016-17 school year, the 4-year graduation rate rose to 73%, outperforming their DOE comparison group.

- Higher Attendance: At Boys and Girls High School and DeWitt Clinton High School, attendance in 2016-17 was the highest it has been in 5 years. Participants in Boys and Girls afterschool program had 92% average attendance (n=122), compared to 81% for the rest of the school.
- At P.S. 297, the percent of students at Level 3 or 4 on state ELA exams increased from 11% in 2014-15 to 25% in 2016-17.

When students report improvement on social and emotional factors, we know from the research that it translates to the classroom setting. In order to succeed in the classroom, students need to feel connected, see a future for themselves and develop learning strategies, such as time management and goal setting. This means helping students to build key factors like resilience and growth mindset, strengthen school and peer connections, develop the skills and strategies needed to learn effectively, and remove obstacles to learning.

Since working in Boys in Girls Community High School, Good Shepherd has established activities and systems that have helped us to achieve results including:

- 1) GSS developed a formal referral protocol wherein anytime a student requires external supports, they can be referred to our staff who assess their needs, connect them to appropriate resources, and follow up with them to ensure a connection was made.
- 2) The agency developed a partnership with Lutheran Medical Center, who maintain an onsite medical clinic in the school building, to refer youth in need of ongoing mental health supports.
- 3) GSS provides youth with individual and group counselling supports on identified areas of need.
- 4) Community school staff are members of the Attendance Team and are responsible for all attendance outreach at the school, including phone calls, letters, and home visits.
- 5) GSS' Community School Director is also a member of the School Leadership Team (SLT) and attend Parent Teacher Association meetings.

We have also seen success around chronic absenteeism, graduation and post-secondary planning which include:

- The percentage of students who are chronically absent (missing 10% of school days or more) has gone down by more than 20% points since 2014.
- 4-year graduation rate has gone up 15% points since 2014.
- The percentage of student enrolling in postsecondary education within six month of graduate rose from 20% in 2014 to 34% in 2016.

Students at Boys and Girls High School who attended the afterschool program more frequently showed more growth in their connections to peers, and those who attended more often were more likely to increase their sense of belonging in school.

Young people are New York City's single largest resource. Our continued success and prosperity depend on how well we prepare them for the future.

Good Shepherd joins the Coalition of Community Schools Excellence in requesting that the Council ensure that the DOE funds both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 schools for another year. GSS has been funded through both New York City and New York State to provide services in Bushwick High School, but unfortunately, the funding from the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) will end if the NYC Department of Education is not willing to cover costs previously paid for by NYSED for a one year period. Without the funds, GSS will need to cut services we provide to the school.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify about Community Schools. I look forward to answering any questions you might have about my testimony. Again, thank you for your time and dedication to this very important issue.

**GSS Community Schools (in SY 2017-18)**

<b>School</b>	<b>Funding Stream</b>	<b>Grades Served</b>
DeWitt Clinton High School (Bronx)	AIDP	9-12
Felicia Rincon High School (Bronx)	NYC DOE	9-12
PS 246 (Bronx)	21 <sup>st</sup> Century funds (GSS is subcontractor through NYC DOE)	K-5
PS 297 (Brooklyn)	NYC DOE	K-5
JHS 292 (Brooklyn)	NYC DOE	6-8
Boys and Girls High School (Brooklyn)	NYC DOE (previously CSGI)	9-12
Bushwick Leaders High School (Brooklyn)	NYC DOE (previously CSGI)	9-12

Boys & Girls was originally both a DOE Community School and a CSGI school. It received both city AND state community school funding at one time and now only receives the regular city funding. It does not get the CSGI money that the city picked up on a year to year basis. Bushwick continues to receive both.



## Partnership with Children

### Public Testimony on “Oversight Hearing: Community Schools and Renewal Schools.”

Tuesday, February 27, 2018

My name is Robin Veenstra-VanderWeele and I am the Chief Program Officer at Partnership with Children. For over 100 years, Partnership with Children has been providing critical support and intervention programs for vulnerable youth in New York City. Today, we partner with nearly 30 New York City public schools to provide a combination of comprehensive mental health, social and emotional learning, and community school leadership. Our school partnerships cover the 5 boroughs and include elementary, middle, and high school settings. Partnership with Children is the lead organization in 9 of the NYC Department of Education Renewal School or Rise School community schools. We partner with an additional 5 New York City community schools as the lead CBO that are funded through other State funding sources such as Attendance Improvement and Drop Out Prevention grants or School Improvement grants. Additionally, we are a Mental Health subcontractor in another 7 NYC community schools – both Renewal and non-Renewal Schools. Our community school presence - whether as the lead or the mental health subcontractor – includes 21 schools across NYC.

The expansion of the community school network in New York cities’ public schools under the current administration is an exciting time for social service organizations that specialize in school-based services. We are thrilled to be part of this work, and we are fortunate to have other non-profit partners, like the ones you are hearing from today, as colleagues in this effort. We, like many of our peers in this work, benefit from our shared knowledge and understanding of the community school model as we move from implementation to continuous improvement in this work. Our commitment to peer support and advocacy for the work of community schools resulted in the development of the New York City Coalition for Community School Excellence. The Coalition has been a great support for both new and veteran community school CBOs and has developed a productive partnership with the New York City Department of Education Office of Community Schools.

Partnership with Children is proud that two of our Renewal Schools – Renaissance School of the Arts in East Harlem and P.S. 67 in Fort Greene – have made steady progress toward their DOE benchmarks and will transition out of the Renewal program to become “Rise Schools” while sustaining their community school efforts for another three school years.

Renaissance School of the Arts is committed to total transformation and fully engages teachers, parents, the surrounding community, and the CBO partners in the community school effort. Last school year, Partnership with Children’s social work team provided 960 student counseling sessions and every student in the building was engaged in some level of social or emotional supports last year. We provide teacher and parent support groups and social-emotional learning workshops to support the school

climate and culture. By working together, Renaissance and Partnership with Children have established a flourishing school culture where a strong student voice is developing, both in and out of the classroom. You see it in an active student government, a student-run school store, and even the way students communicate and support their ideas when interacting with adults. And since 2014, the percentage of students proficient in English Language Arts (ELA) has increased 17 points and the percentage of students proficient in math has increased 13 points.

We also have an excellent partnership at P.S. 67 with an ambitious principal and faculty. Partnership with Children staff and our CBO partners are in the school building before, during, and after the school day – and during the summer – working side-by-side with the principal. Parents stay after drop-off to participate in community-building assemblies with teachers and students. Families and Partnership with Children staff meet to tackle issues related to homelessness and behavioral and emotional needs in the home and at school. Regular student attendance is up, the school climate and culture has been transformed with engaged parents and teachers, and we are seeing students making academic gains. At P.S. 67 proficiency in ELA has improved 20 percentage points and 10 percentage points in math.

Coordination across the CBO community and within each community school only gets us so far. The critical investments provided by this City Council through the Mayor's Office and the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Mental Health provide a transformative opportunity for our community schools. We benefit exponentially from the City's commitment to Mental Health services as a core and critical component of the work of community schools.

In fact, New York City is leading the nation in integrating comprehensive, high-quality mental health services in schools as part of the community school strategy. Superintendents, principals, parents and teachers report that having a school-based crisis response support team as well as a pro-active behavioral support plan across the school– which is common in Renewal school community schools across the city – makes the work of teaching and learning possible. Students in our schools – the overwhelming majority of who are growing up in poverty – benefit enormously from the mental health services and, as a result, have better attendance and achievement rates. We urge this body to not only maintain the city's commitment to community schools for years to come, but to sustain and expand the funding for mental health services in ALL community schools – not just the AIDP and Renewal and Rise Schools – as part of the city's commitment to the health and wellbeing of all students and schools.

Thank you for your support and for your attention today.

Robin Veenstra-VanderWeele  
Chief Program Officer, Partnership with Children  
299 Broadway, Suite 1300  
New York, NY



**Testimony of Terry Kim**  
**Submitted Testimony on the FY 18 Executive Budget**  
**Committee on Education, Oversight-Community Schools and Renewal Schools**  
**Tuesday February 27, 2018**

Good Afternoon, my name is Terry Kim, Senior Policy Analyst at Children's Aid. I would like to thank Chair Mark Treyger and the members of the Education Committee for the opportunity to give testimony on the state of community schools in New York City.

For 165 years, Children's Aid has been committed to ensuring that there are no boundaries to the aspirations of young people, and no limits to their potential. We are leading a comprehensive counterattack on the obstacles that threaten kids' achievements in school and in life. We have also constructed a continuum of services, positioned every step of the way throughout childhood that builds well-being and prepares young people to succeed at every level of education and every milestone of life. Today our over 2,000 full and part time staff members empower nearly 50,000 children, youth and their families through our network of more than 50 locations including early childhood education centers, public schools, community centers and community health clinics in four New York City neighborhoods – Harlem, Washington Heights, the South Bronx and the north shore of Staten Island.

Children's Aid has operated community schools in partnership with the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) for the past 25 years. Currently, we partner with 22 community schools serving nearly 10,000 K-12 students. Children's Aid believes that community schools are a strategy to remove the barriers to learning that get in the way of children and youth being able to succeed academically in school. Key to the success of community schools is having a lead partner who coordinates the services at the school level and also has a full-time presence in the school. The array of community school services can vary according to the needs of students and schools, but often include expanded learning opportunities, medical and mental health services, and parent/family engagement support.

Extensive research shows that schools need at least 3-5 years to show sustained improvement. Community schools take time but are impactful on student success. The Learning Policy Institute published a groundbreaking national study of community school research. They defined the following as the four pillars of community schools: integrated student supports, expanded learning time and opportunities, family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practices. With these components coordinated in a school, their research found that community schools increase academic achievement and attendance, increase high school graduation and college going rates, and increase parent engagement and leadership.<sup>1</sup>

Parent and family engagement is a foundational component of Children's Aid's community school strategy. For nearly a decade, we have been supporting parents and families through our Ercilia Pepin Parent Leadership Institute in the Washington Heights community and more recently through our federally funded Family Success Network (modeled after the Ercilia Pepin

Leadership Institute) in six South Bronx community schools. Four critical elements in our parent and family engagement approach are: 1) Parent Engagement Coordinators who serve as community leaders and systematically integrate parent engagement into schools; 2) Parent Resource Centers which help parents develop strong school and community ties; 3) Adult education in a variety of classes and workshops to help build skills; and 4) Leadership Development opportunities so our parents can become active community members through volunteering and advocacy projects. With these four elements at the core of our parent and family engagement approach, we have engaged over 1,000 parents in the two locations combined. Through a range of classes, workshops, and events, Children's Aid seeks to address the personal needs of families and also strengthen their ability to support academic achievement at home. The list of topics we offer families vary but can include building children's executive functioning skills, creating a college-going culture, immigrant rights, nutrition, and English-as-a-Second-Language.

The community school strategy is a long-term approach that requires the school system, city agencies and community partners to coordinate and collaborate. It is imperative that the administration is committed to investing in all community schools and continue to strengthen the infrastructure needed to sustain the progress schools are making in New York City.

Beginning in 2013, two cohorts of three year grants were awarded to community-based organizations who affirmatively chose the community school strategy through a state request for proposal known as the Community Schools Grant Initiative or CSGI. Once those grants had sunset, the NYCDOE brought the 20 CSGI schools under the city's initiative but for one year only. For the past two years, we have had to advocate for the CSGI schools to remain part of the city's community school efforts.

At Children's Aid, five of our 22 community schools received funding through the Community Schools Grant Initiative. Through this grant, Children's Aid successfully implemented City Connects, a national program that provides each identified child a tailored set of supports and opportunities to address the out-of-school factors that interfere with learning. In the 2016-2017 school year, 2,603 students in our community schools received 11,797 services, which included health/medical, academic support, and afterschool. Of the principals and teachers surveyed in Children's Aid community schools, 93% of principals think student support has improved at their school as a result of our work with City Connects. Indicators suggest students are on track for long-term positive outcomes. Furthermore, a study by Teachers College, Columbia University assessed the costs and benefits of City Connects, including the costs of services to which children and families are connected, and found that every \$1 invested yielded \$3 in benefits.<sup>2</sup>

Without continued funding, these 20 community schools will not be able to continue to make the progress and meet the needs of their students. After two years of investment, the New York City Department of Education has made no indication that there is a commitment to keep these schools in the city's initiative for the next school year. **We request that the 20 CSGI community**

**schools be equitably funded and permanently exist as community schools under the New York City Department of Education's Office of Community Schools.**

With our community schools work we've also found that several targeted services or strategies when implemented well succeed in alleviating the barriers to learning for children. After school and summer programs play an essential role in keeping children engaged and safe during non-school hours in addition to being a critical support for working families. In Spring 2017, the New York City Department of Education announced that an additional 69 schools would now fall under the city's community school initiative through the New York State Education Department's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center (21CCLC) grants funded at \$23.3 million. Funding for afterschool and expanded learning is an integral part of the community school strategy but is not the core source of funding. Lead agencies leverage education and non-education dollars to provide essential programs and services for students. To maintain fidelity to the community schools strategy, 21CCLC grants alone cannot sustain the work. Therefore, **we recommend that the 69 community schools funded under 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers are equitably funded to exist as full service community schools.**

Furthermore, School's Out New York City (SONYC) & COMPASS initiatives have been a model of what an afterschool system can and should look like to serve children, youth and families with high-quality programs. The program's shared emphasis on academic skills enhancement, cultural enrichment, sports, recreation, community engagement, and leadership development offer children and adolescents the best of both the youth development and education worlds. In the 2016-2017 school year, Children's Aid served just over 2,500 young people in after school programs across 15 DYCD-funded sites and three council-funded programs in elementary and middle schools, and community centers in our targeted communities. To ensure that high quality services are provided, we employ more than 160 full and part-time employees. All Children's Aid after school program sites in our community schools have a Community Schools Director to ensure that the program site is safe and organized. Our part-time employees are youth workers who are often local college or high school students; to education coordinators who are certified teachers who provide tutoring and support the planning of the youth workers; and community educators from other local community-based organizations that specialize in leadership development, sports, the arts, etc., are essential to our program quality and design. Many of these employees are from the community or have graduated from the very program in which they're working.

The Mayor's FY2019 preliminary budget does not ensure that all 34,000 middle schools have access to services. We currently operate SONYC programs at six sites across Washington Heights, East Harlem, and the Bronx, serving over 550 students during the summer. **We request the restoration of \$16 million to level funding for elementary after-school programs and the immediate restoration of \$20.35 million for summer programs so that 34,000 middle school students in after-school have access to summer programs.**

As an agency, committed to eradicating poverty in the neighborhoods that we serve, we will do all that we can to advocate, protect and increase funding for the most under-resourced

communities. It is the right and moral thing to do to ensure that our children and families have the best opportunity available to realize their full potential. Children's Aid sincerely thanks the New York City Council for their vigorous support of children, youth, families, and communities in New York City. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today on this very important issue. Please feel free to contact me at [tkim@childrensaidnyc.org](mailto:tkim@childrensaidnyc.org) with any questions regarding this testimony.

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<sup>1</sup>Oakes, J., Maier, A., & Daniel, J. (2017) Community Schools: An Evidence-Based Strategy for Equitable School Improvement. Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center. Retrieved February 26, 2018 from <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/equitable-community-schools>

<sup>2</sup>Levin, H. M. & McEwan, P.J. (2002). Cost-effectiveness analysis and educational policy. In H. M. Levin & P. J. McEwan (Eds.), *Cost-effectiveness and educational policy: 2002 yearbook of the American Education Finance Association* (pp. 1-17). Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

# REPORT

## February 27, 2017

The following brief is written in strong opposition to the proposed closure of the **High School for Health Careers and Sciences (06M468)** and will serve as an attempt to shift the narrative in which the data being used to support the proposal for the closure of M468 is viewed. The rationale for closure provided to the Panel for Educational Policy deals with three key school metrics: 1) enrollment, 2) graduation rate, 3) academic performance (including college readiness). This document will address each of these metrics, but first it is important to become more familiar with the population this school serves and to also view this school's performance not only up against the Citywide and Borough averages, but as part of the George Washington Educational Campus and also Renewal Schools.

### I. Context

The High School for Health Careers and Sciences currently serves 460 students. 175 of these students are classified as English Language Learners, which puts our school population of ELL students at 37.8% of the total student body. This number is inordinately high-especially when compared to the Renewal Schools average of 21.3%, the Citywide Average of 12% and the Borough Average of 9.2%. This number puts M468 in the 93rd percentile (34/487 High Schools) for ELL students citywide. Further, of the 175 ELL students, 43% (76 students) are designated as Entering or Emerging English Language Learners as determined by our school's administration of the NYSESLAT. There is substantial evidence that shows that ELL students consistently perform lower on standardized exams compared to their native-English-speaking counterparts.

According to Kate Menken, author of the widely cited, seminal work titled *English Learners Left Behind*, "*language proficiency mediates test performance, so ELLs typically receive scores far below those of other students.*"

This is well-butressed by the 2010 work of the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education in which they add, "Despite efforts to make state and national standardized achievement tests more accessible for English language learners, the outcomes of these assessments may not be useful in evaluating student learning and informing instruction due to their inherent limitations."

When understanding the socioeconomic needs of the students at the High School for Health Careers and Sciences, it is also important to draw attention to the Economics Need Index and the percent of our students living in temporary housing. The economics need Index at M468 is 85.4%, which is substantially

higher than the Renewal Average of 77%, the citywide average of 66.6% and the Borough average of 65.8%. The temporary housing index at M468 is 28.5% compared to the Renewal average of 16.1%, the Borough Average of 11.5% and the citywide average of 11.3%. This puts M468 in the 96th percentile (19/487 high schools) of all city high schools for percentage of students in temporary housing.

The simple act of getting to school is a major obstacle facing children in temporary housing. According to Liza Pappas, an education policy and budget analyst at the Independent Budget Office, "The key issue is getting to school. Children living in shelters attend school significantly less than other students...two-thirds of students living in shelters were either chronically absent or severely chronically absent in 2013-2014." This sets the narrative for contextualizing how the school should be viewed in order to accurately compare the data represented by certain metrics used as rationale for proposed closure.

## **II. Enrollment**

The decline (-26%) in student enrollment at M468 is being used in the rationale for the proposed closure of the school. Again, it is important to understand the context in which this metric should be viewed. Washington Heights has historically had a rich history of immigrants and is currently home to the largest Dominican community in New York City. According to data from the New York State Comptroller's office, "the population of Washington Heights grew by more than 15% between 1970 and 2000." The population fluctuated nominally between 2000 and 2010 and then resumed, "growing by 6% to reach a record of 218,500 in 2013." This record population can be directly correlated the highest enrollment at M468, when the school had 657 students enrolled during the 2012-2013 school year. While it is true that M468 has seen a decline in enrollment, so too has Washington Heights seen a decline and demographic change in population since 2013. According to Andrew Small's compilation of New York City Comptroller's Office data, "about 10,000 fewer Hispanic people lived in Washington Heights in 2015." On average Renewal High Schools saw an average decrease in enrollment of 33%. Chancellor Fariña Mayor de Blasio have to bare some of the responsibility for enrollment drop at stigmatized Renewal schools. Further, District 6 (which includes all of Washington Heights) has seen a precipitous drop in enrollment as well. Since the 2012-2013 school year, District 6 has seen an 11% decline in high school enrollment. Using decline in enrollment out of the general contextualization of changing neighborhood populations is not a valuable metric for judging school quality.

## **III. Graduation Rate**

There are 10 high schools located in District 6 of which only 1 (M468) is classified as a Renewal School. Of those 10 high schools, 6 are classified as

screened or limited screened schools in terms of high school admission method. There are only 4 Educational Option admission high schools in district 6 and all four are in the shared space at the George Washington Educational Campus. It is disingenuous to compare an Educational Option admission school like M468 to a screened or limited screened school. For example, The City College Academy of the Arts (06M293) a screened school in District 6 with a 2016-2017 4 year graduation rate of 90.4%, offers priority to continuing 8th graders, but uses a selection criteria prioritizing course grades (ranging from 81-100), standardized test scores in ELA and Math, and attendance and punctuality.

In order to accurately assess the graduation rate at M468, it is necessary to compare M468 to other similar schools in the district which use the same admissions selection criteria.

A fair comparison group are the other three schools in the building (06M462, 06M467, 06M463) which are all educational option admissions. When up against comparable schools it is clear that M468 4 year graduation rate during 2016-2017 of 63.8% is significantly higher than the building average (M468 excluded for all building averages) of 57.8%. In 2015-2016 the 4 year graduation rate at M468 was 64.7% compared to the building average of 57%. Again, significantly higher.

In the 2014-2015 school year M468 had a 4 year graduation rate of 70% compared to the building average of 56.8%. In 2013-2014, one of the lowest 4 year graduation rates at M468 (59%), it was still comparable to the building average of 61.7%. It is worth noting that since the 2012-2013 school year, M468 graduation rate has improved by almost 5 percentage points. Although these numbers are below the citywide and borough averages, remember the context in which this data should be viewed. Further, M468 6 year graduation rate for 2016-2017 (78.5%) far exceeds the Building Average (68%), the Renewal Schools average (66.3%) and is on par with the Citywide average (82.8%) and the Borough average (85.7%).

### **III. Academic Performance**

The academic performance of the students coupled with notion that the M468 budget is considerably higher has been used in the rationale for closure presented by Superintendent Ramirez and Chancellor Fariña. At the District 6 Town Hall on January 16, 2018 Chancellor Fariña told the community that "the budget at Health Careers and Sciences was nearly double that of the other schools in the building." This notion is inherently false. The budget at M468 for the fiscal year 2017 was \$5,718,050 and while it is accurate that this is the second highest budget in the George Washington Educational Campus and M468 did receive

100% of its fair student funding the budget is only \$596,485 higher than the building average, or 11.6% higher. Further, the George Washington Educational Campus building average expenditure per student is \$10,604.

The average per student expenditure per student at M468 is \$12,430 (+14.7%). There are literally hundreds of metrics that can be used to assess a school's performance. It is also difficult to determine which metrics should carry the most weight when assessing a school's performance. The decision to close a school is a serious decision that affects not only the students but also teachers, staff members, the community and other schools in the district. There are very few metrics in which M468 performs in the bottom quartile; in fact it is quite the opposite.

When compared to the aggregate New York City school's data from the School Quality Guide The High School for Health Careers and Sciences performs in the top quartile in many metrics and in the 50th percentile for many others. The picture that emerges is a school, not without its own share of problems, but a successful school in many metric categories which works predominantly with some of New York City's most needy and challenging students.

Email: [parentsunitedvoice@gmail.com](mailto:parentsunitedvoice@gmail.com)



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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President.

February 12, 2018

Honorable Bill de Blasio  
Mayor  
City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

Your recent decision to reprove Brooklyn Collegiate from closure and instead opt for additional supports and investments is exactly the treatment that we, the undersigned elected officials of Northern Manhattan, request of you for the comparable, if not, better performing High School for Health Careers and Sciences. Similar to the advocates of Brooklyn Collegiate, we also believe that more investment in High School for Health Careers and Sciences can lead to sustainable success for its students.

We oppose the closure of the High School for Health Careers and Sciences based on performance data indicating significant progress in key areas. Health Careers and Sciences has improved in 4 and 6-year graduation rates, attendance rates, college readiness and has also received Quality Review ratings of "proficient" and "well developed." Though we recognize persisting challenges such as declining student enrollment and lack of AP course offerings, these challenges are not indicative of student performance.

In terms of graduation data, the DOE has used too narrow a scope to make accurate claims on graduation rates at Health Careers and Sciences. Though we should be concerned that, from 2015 to 2017, graduation rates went down from 70% to 62%, we should also recognize that over the 5 years since Health Careers and Sciences became a renewal school, graduation rates have actually increased by 13%. The school had a graduation rate of 49% for the 2012-13 school year. Furthermore, the 6-year graduation rate of 78.5% is higher than comparison schools (71%) and other renewal schools (66.3%).

Likewise, the data on college readiness also suggests that Health Careers and Sciences is improving. The college readiness rate more than doubled last year, moving from 8% to 21%. This college readiness rate is comparable to other renewal schools (22.7%). On the college readiness index, Health Careers and Sciences (14%) surpasses the citywide average for students in the lowest third (12%). It has also shown a trend toward improvement in this area, since it was just 1% in the 2015-16 school year. Moreover, the school's metric score of 4.36 for college



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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

persistence outperforms the borough average (3.33), city average (3.29), and renewal school average (2.73).

The DOE's Educational Impact Statement on Health Careers and Sciences cites declining enrollment and graduation rates as evidence of a need for closure, noting that student enrollment declined by 29% in the last 6 years. However, this decline is not a performance indicator attributable to students. Additionally, enrollment is down less at this school than all other Renewal Schools. The DOE should also consider that District 6 enrollment is down 11% for the same timeframe. A district-wide decrease suggests a need for systemic reevaluation of enrollment processes and not a need to close an improving school.

If the school were closed, it would be best for students to avoid displacement and attend schools on the same campus. However, the data from the co-located schools suggests that this would not make a great difference. Health Careers has the second highest graduation rate on the campus and is a mere 4% lower in college readiness than the proposed alternative. Hence, much like the students of Brooklyn Collegiate, Health Careers and Sciences students would not have better options immediately available to them.

Lastly, in terms of qualitative measures, the school has been rated as "proficient" and "well developed" by two separate Quality Reviewers. These evaluations did not indicate the need for corrective action nor signal any concerns that would warrant a decision of imminent closure. Absent any processes and protocols to justify closure to the school community, parents and students were blindsided.

We recognize that High School for Health Career and Sciences is not performing at the highest level it can and that we need to continue supporting this school and its community. To this end, the undersigned elected officials have done our share of funding and partnerships. However, we ask that you allot the time necessary for continued improvement at this school in the same way you that did for Brooklyn Collegiate. In addition, please note that Manhattan Community Board 12 has passed a thoughtful resolution in opposition (attached). We have attached Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer's letter to the Chancellor, which also opposes this closure. We urge you to stop the current process of hearings and the PEP vote to close High School for Health Careers and Sciences.

Sincerely,

Gale Brewer  
Manhattan Borough President

Adriano Espaillat  
Member of U.S. Congress



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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ydanis Rodriguez".

Ydanis Rodriguez  
Member of NYC Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carmen De La Rosa".

Carmen De La Rosa  
Member of NYS Assembly

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marisol Alcántara".

Marisol Alcántara  
Member of NYS Senate

Enclosure

CC: Shahabuddeen A. Ally, Community Board 12 Chairperson  
Fe Florimon, Community Board 12 Youth & Education Committee  
Eddie Silverio, Director of Catholic Charities Alianza Youth Services  
Zakiyah Ansari, Alliance for Quality Education Advocacy Director  
Maria Bautista, Alliance for Quality Education Campaigns Director  
Kesi Foster, Make the Road New York  
Natasha Capers, Coalition for Educational Justice  
Sydney Renwick, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs  
Johanna Garcia, Community Education Council 6  
City Council Member Mark Treyger  
Speaker Corey Johnson



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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

February 6, 2018

Ms. Carmen Farina  
Chancellor  
New York City Department of Education  
Tweed Courthouse  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chancellor Farina,

Thank you for meeting with me at the Town Hall in District 6 on January 16, 2018. I appreciated the time and consideration that you invested in the discussion about the proposed closing of High School for Health Careers and Sciences. On January 23, 2018, Community Board 12 voted 36 in favor of opposing the closure, 0 against, and 2 abstaining. I agree with the resolution and hope the issue can be taken off the PEP agenda. A copy of the resolution is attached. The reason I feel that closure should not be recommended is that the numbers do not show that Health Careers' performance is as poor as some have indicated. As you know, the data matters.

Since entering the Renewal Schools program, High School for Health Careers and Sciences has shown improvement in several important measurable indicators of school quality. The transformation of the school into a community school with guidance and support from the DOE, and the tireless efforts of the school's community have all enabled Health Careers and Sciences to get back on track and make substantial improvement.

The DOE's Educational Impact Statement on Health Careers and Sciences cites declining enrollment and graduation rates as evidence of a need for closure, noting that student enrollment declined by 29% in the last 6 years. However, this decline is not a performance indicator attributable to students. Additionally, enrollment is down less at this school than all other Renewal Schools. The DOE should also consider that District 6 enrollment is down 11% for the same timeframe. A district-wide decrease suggests a need for systemic reevaluation of enrollment processes and not a need to close improving schools.

In terms of graduation data, I believe the DOE has used too narrow a scope to make accurate claims on graduation rates at Health Careers and Sciences. Though we should be concerned that, from 2015 to 2017, graduation rates went down from 70% to 62%, we should also recognize that over the 5 years since Health Careers and Sciences became a renewal school, graduation rates have actually increased by 13%. The school had a graduation rate of 49% for the 2012-13 school



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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

year. Furthermore, the 6-year graduation rate of 78.5% is higher than comparison schools (71%) and other renewal schools (66.3%).

Likewise, the data on college readiness also suggests that Health Careers and Sciences is improving. The college readiness rate more than doubled last year, moving from 8% to 21%. This college readiness rate is comparable to other renewal schools (22.7%). On the college readiness index, Health Careers and Sciences (14%) surpasses the citywide average for students in the lowest third (12%). It has also shown a trend toward improvement in this area, since it was just 1% in the 2015-16 school year. Moreover, the school's metric score of 4.36 for college persistence outperforms the borough average (3.33), city average (3.29), and renewal school average (2.73).

If the school were closed, it would be best for students to avoid displacement and attend schools on the same campus. However, the data from the co-located schools suggests that this would not make a great difference. Health Careers has the second highest graduation rate on the campus and is a mere 4% lower in college readiness than the proposed alternative. Hence, this closure would not provide a better path.

Lastly, in terms of qualitative measures, the school has been rated as "proficient and well developed" by two separate Quality Reviewers. These evaluations did not indicate the need for corrective action nor signal any concerns that would warrant a decision of imminent closure. Absent the usual processes and protocols to justify closure the school community, most importantly, parents and students were completely blindsided and the learning environment needlessly upended.

I recognize that High School for Health Career and Sciences is not performing at the highest level it can and that we need to continue supporting this school and its community. However, I ask that you allot the time necessary for continued improvement at this school. I urge you to stop the current process of hearings and vote to close Health Careers and Sciences.

Sincerely,

Gale A. Brewer

Enclosure



## Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

530 West 166<sup>th</sup> St. 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10032

Phone: (212) 568-8500, Fax: (212) 740-8197

Website: [www.nyc.gov/mcb12](http://www.nyc.gov/mcb12)

Shahabuddeen A. Ally, Esq., Chairperson  
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

February 1, 2018

Hon. Carmen Fariña, Chancellor  
NYC Department of Education  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

Panel for Educational Policy  
52 Chambers Street  
New York NY 10007

### **RE: Resolution Opposing the Proposed Closure of the High School for Health Careers & Sciences at the George Washington Educational Campus.**

Dear Ms. Fariña:

At the General Meeting, Tuesday, January, 23, 2018 Community Board 12: Manhattan, passed the following resolution with a vote of 36 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 abstentions strongly opposing the proposed closure of the High School for Health Careers & Sciences at the George Washington Educational Campus and making several recommendations that countered the biases of selective data analysis for such closure with other performance indicators or variable graduation rates that evolve and are nonlinear. The Board recommended and suggested the need for a better mix of learning levels from entering cohort classes based on improved promotional and recruitment efforts by each of the campuses four principals instead of reliance only on the Office of Enrollment for those purposes. Finally, given the fact that health care is a growing field for employment and three of our community's largest institutions are health-related it is highly appropriate that this school be based here.

**WHEREAS:** The New York City Department of Education (DoE) announced on December 18, 2017 its intention, based on a recommendation of the District's Superintendent, to close the High School for Health Careers & Sciences (HSHCS) at the George Washington Educational Campus (GWEC) in June 2018; and

**WHEREAS:** A well-attended Public Hearing was held on January 8, 2018 at which the Manhattan Borough President; the District's Councilmember, its NYS Senator, and Assembly member; many parents, students, and teachers of the school; representatives of unions and community-based organizations; and members of the public testified their support of the school and their strong objection to this proposal; and

**WHEREAS:** The primary basis of DoE's recommendation to close HSHCS was the claim of a continuous and cascading decline in the graduation rates of cohort classes which assertion was itself based on selective data analysis; and

**WHEREAS:** Significant factors of HSHCS's performance subsequent to its being designated a "Renewal School" in 2015 were ignored and a school's graduation rate evolves in a non-linear fashion; and

**WHEREAS:** 85% of HSHCS's student body speak a language other than English as their primary language yet the school held the highest graduation rates amongst the four schools on the GWEC during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 academic years with a cohort class rate of 70% and 65%, and a graduation rate is 62% for the 2016-17 academic year; and

**WHEREAS:** Another measure of HSHCS's performance and evolving improvement was officially reported on the annual "Quality Review Report 2016-2017" issued by DoE in which the HSHCS was rated as "*Proficient and Well Developed*" in the areas of "*Instructional Core*", "*School Culture*", "*Systems for Improvement*", "*Teacher Teams & Leadership Development*", "*Pedagogy*", "*Curriculum*", "*Positive Learning Environment*", "*Assessment High Expectations*", and "*High Expectations*" despite its high enrollment of Level 1 (least academically prepared) students; and

**WHEREAS:** The fate of a school should not be based solely on graduation rates while ignoring such other factors as enrollment or admissions rates so as to avoid selection bias from any predictive analysis or outcomes for a "failing" or "successful" Renewal School; and

**WHEREAS:** The disparities within the different schools' student enrollment levels (where one school is weighted with too many low performing students) and the need to make improvements in this area with different promotional and recruitment strategies was brought to the Chancellor's attention in March, 2017 by the District 6 Community Education Council at the Citywide Education Council meeting, which requested that these ideas be shared with the Superintendent, and which the Chancellor failed to do; and

**WHEREAS:** There is an established and consistent pattern of support from Community Board 12, Manhattan (e.g., advocacy for capital funding for the library, swimming pools, and biotechnology lab/program, etc.) as well as substantial funding from the Manhattan Borough President (the Computer Labs) and Cornell University's Cooperative Extension Program (Hydroponics & Aquaponics Lab) for HSHCS and other GWEC schools, and the Board has continued to advocate for the students' growth and achievement, more after-school programs, and involvement of other city agencies for additional support; and

**WHEREAS:** Health care is a growing field for employment and as three of our community's largest institutions are health-related, it is highly appropriate that the HSHCS be based in this community; now therefore be it

**RESOLVED:** Community Board 12, Manhattan strongly objects to the District Superintendent's recommendation and the Schools Chancellor's proposed closure of the High School for Health Careers and Sciences based primarily on a distortion of graduation rates and the lack of sufficient school performance evaluations during the year; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** Community Board 12, Manhattan demands the DoE's Enrollment Office and the principals of all four schools on the George Washington Education Campus have opportunities to engage in better promotional and recruitment efforts throughout the entire district.

Sincerely,

  
Shaharuddin A. Ally, Esq.  
Chairperson

cc:

Hon. Andrew Cuomo, Governor  
Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor  
Hon. Letitia James, Public Advocate  
Hon. Carl Heastie, NYS Assembly Speaker  
Hon. Corey Johnson, NYC City Council Speaker  
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Comptroller  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman  
Hon. Brian Benjamin, State Senator  
Hon. Marisol Alcantara, State Senator  
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Assembly Member  
Hon. Alfred Taylor, Assembly Member  
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member  
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member  
Hon. Betty A. Rosa, Chancellor, Board of Regents  
Hon. Mary Ellen Elia, Commissioner NYSED

Hon. Mark Treyger, Chair City Council Ed. Committee  
Hon. Inez Barron, Chair City Council Higher Ed Cmte  
Hon. Aldrin Bonilla, Deputy Manh. Borough President  
Hon. Manuel Ramirez, Superintendent CSD6  
Hon. Peter Calandrella - Staten Island Representative  
Hon. Isaac Carmignani - Member PEP  
Hon. Geneal Chacon - Bronx Representative  
Hon. April Chapman - Brooklyn Representative  
Hon. T. Elzora Cleveland - Member PEP  
Hon. Deborah Dillingham - Queens Representative  
Hon. Michael Kraft - Manhattan Representative  
Aneiry Batista, Chief of Staff  
Bich Ha Pham, Director of Policy  
Angel Vasquez, Chief of Staff  
Jose Louis, Chief of Staff  
Mariel De La Cruz, Community Liaison CB12, M  
Jessica Reynoso, Community Liaison, CB 12, M

# THE PARENTS UNITED

## IN SUPPORT OF SAVING OUR: HIGH SCHOOL FOR HEALTH CAREERS & SCIENCES 06M468 @ GEORGE WASHINGTON EDUCATIONAL CAMPUS (GWEC)

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February 5, 2018

Honorable Carmen Fariña, Chancellor  
NYC Department of Education  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

### LETTER OF SUPPORT

Dear Chancellor Fariña:

We the parents of *High School For Health Careers and Sciences at the George Washington Educational Campus* are writing to express our frustration with the pending proposal announced on Monday, December 18, 2017 to close our school. This proposal is based on the argument that our school enrollment and graduation rates have decreased 26% since the year 2013-2014 to the present. Although recently updated data reveals that the school has enormously improved.

The decrease of enrollment and graduation rates already existed in 2012-2013 under previous administration, which the notification has failed to acknowledge. In addition, by then the school did not have many support systems or structures. Our school is comprised mostly of ENL students. This population attended segregated classes whereby instruction was taught using obsolete methodologies, not aligned to Common Core Shifts. ENL students were not integrated with the mainstream population and did not have exposure to high quality instruction and enrichment activities such as clubs. Special Education classes were also segregated and also received instruction in isolation with the traditional self-contained model in a 15-1 setting also, not aligned to Common Core Shifts. ICT classes were practically non-existent. Students were not offered appropriate supports like: tutoring, Saturday Academy, ACHIEVE 3000; Think Through Math and music, and art-based enrichment activities.

The previous arguments also suggest that our school is failing because it did not meet specific renewal benchmarks. However visible progress in the areas of attendance, graduation rates and increase in parental involvement would seem to dispel these arguments. Again, prior to 2013, our school was not in good standing, regarding performance. In 2013, our school hired a new principal with the objective of improving the school's performance. It worth to mention, that this new Principal inherited a difficult staff and a school that was in utter chaos, which didn't stop from roll up his sleeve and get the work done. Ever since he was hired, he has diligently and consistently committed himself to improving the school's general performance. In fact, the graduation rate has enormously improved under his leadership.

Unlike the previous administration, our current principal has successfully implemented a series of support systems and structures that have yielded higher rates of student success and achievement. These gains and progress became tangible via the increase on our Quality Review (SY2016-2017), in which the school has obtained proficient in most areas and well developed in other important areas such as teacher teams and school culture. All is credited to his effort of working tirelessly while implementing structured time for teacher planning, teacher teams, extended learning time, enrichment clubs, and a specific focus on school-wide systems and structures that would facilitate academic growth for students, as well as support for teachers and parental involvement, as the school has yielded greater progress in comparison with previous years. As parents and citizen of this community, we hope that our school will remain open for our students, and that we all can continue to have access and equity through maximized usage of our community *High School For Health Careers & Sciences*.

Respectfully,

**The Parents United**

For High School For Health Careers & Sciences.

# THE PARENTS UNITED

## IN SUPPORT OF SAVING OUR: HIGH SCHOOL FOR HEALTH CAREERS & SCIENCES 06M468 @ GEORGE WASHINGTON EDUCATIONAL CAMPUS (GWEC)

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February 16, 2018

Hon. Letitia James  
Public Advocate of the City of New York  
1 Centre Street 15th Floor  
New York, New York 10007

### LETTER OF SUPPORT

Dear Mrs. James:

We the parents of *High School For Health Careers and Sciences at the George Washington Educational Campus* are writing to express our frustration with the pending proposal announced on Monday, December 18, 2017 to close our school. This proposal is based on the argument that our school enrollment and graduation rates have decreased 26% since the year 2013-2014 to the present, when updated data reveals that the school has enormously improved.

The decrease of enrollment and graduation rates already existed in 2012-2013 under previous administration, which the notification has failed to acknowledge. In addition, by then the school did not have many support systems or structures. Our school is comprised mostly of ENL students. This population attended segregated classes whereby instruction was taught using obsolete methodologies, not aligned to Common Core Shifts. ENL students were not integrated with the mainstream population and did not have exposure to high quality instruction and enrichment activities such as clubs. Special Education classes were also segregated and also received instruction in isolation with the traditional self-contained model in a 15-1 setting also, not aligned to Common Core Shifts. ICT classes were practically non-existent. Students were not offered appropriate supports like: tutoring, Saturday Academy, ACHIEVE 3000; Think Through Math and music, and art-based enrichment activities.

The previous arguments also suggest that our school is failing because it did not meet specific renewal benchmarks. However visible progress in the areas of attendance, graduation rates and increase in parental involvement would seem to dispel these arguments. Again, prior to 2013, our school was not in good standing, regarding performance. In 2013, our school hired a new principal with the objective of improving the school's performance. It worth to mention, that this new Principal inherited a difficult staff and a school that was in utter chaos, which didn't stop from roll up his sleeve and get the work done. Ever since he was hired, he has diligently and consistently committed himself to improving the school's general performance. In fact, the graduation rate has enormously improved under his leadership.

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Respectfully,

***The Parents United***

For High School For Health Careers & Sciences.  
Email: [parentsunitedvoice@gmail.com](mailto:parentsunitedvoice@gmail.com)



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**Gale A. Brewer, Borough President**

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
February 27, 2018 PUBLIC MEETING

MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT GALE A. BREWER

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Good afternoon. I am Patrick Reynolds Joseph, Senior Education Policy Analyst for the Manhattan Borough President. I am delivering these remarks on behalf of the Office of the Manhattan Borough President. Today, I offer testimony concerning the Renewal Schools program and how it can better serve the various communities of New York City. I believe that there are at least three factors deserving of closer inspection, which can be the source of such improvement: enrollment, support strategies, and accountability.

First, enrollment is driven by nuanced and complex demographic, bureaucratic and perception-based factors – all of which are attributable to adult decision-making and not student performance. Yet, enrollment numbers are often cited in decisions regarding significant school utilization changes such as closures and truncations. Given its status as a deciding factor for such changes, a clear and explicit strategy to improve enrollment in our Renewal Schools seems necessary. In truth, just by using the banner of Renewal Schools, the DOE has stigmatized the schools it seeks to improve. That stigma, coupled with a lack of strategy to increase enrollment at Renewal Schools, has only worked toward minimizing enrollment rates in the same schools that are later punished for low enrollment.

Second, the DOE uses evidence-based strategies to support Renewal Schools but they should also take into account the specific challenges present when these strategies fail to move the needle on student performance. When an intervention strategy and its associate resources prove ineffective, there must be a mechanism for recognizing efficacy. The same is also true when an intervention strategy *is* effective.

Lastly, the DOE should communicate an explicit evaluation model and theory of change that explains the mismatch between budget inputs, interventions and their outcomes. Every effective system design includes feedback loops that sustain an evaluation-based effort to continually improve and provide better outcomes. The Renewal Schools program should be no different.

The case of the Wadleigh School fully exemplifies these last two points. The DOE says that it has supported Wadleigh with Math consultants, but this school has had 0% proficiency in Math while under the DOE's supervision as a Renewal School. Wadleigh now faces a proposal for truncation, in part, because of this statistic. If there were recognition of the inefficacy of the supports that were used at Wadleigh via feedback systems built into the Renewal Schools program, there is little doubt that the DOE would be able to better equip the school with the resources and supports that would actually improve that proficiency level. Therefore, I ask that we all push the DOE to use more analytical approaches to enrollment, support strategies and accountability mechanisms for the Renewal Schools program. Thank you.

Medeliz Miranda, sophomore

Hello, my name is Madelix Miranda and I'm a sophomore at New Explorers High School. My current education here is good, but I also understand the condition in which the school is in. I choose this school as my third choice of high school, I didn't think that this was a renewal school nor I thought that it was going to close in the nearer future, all i thought when i got here in my freshmen year was to get good grades and pass to tenth grade. What i expected of this school at the beginning of my high school year was a nice performance school, but what i got was a renewal school that barely has everything that i expected. Sure, it has arts and dance, but i enrolled to this school for arts only. I purposely took whatever i needed that was important, like english, social studies, health, spanish, literature, etc. but in reality all i wanted was art, not theater, music, percussion ensemble, or other non art related subjects. But that's not too important, what's important the education that I as a IEP student need to get. As my IEP document says, I need two teachers in each classroom, but if this school gets closed, then the teachers i have here won't help me in any other school that i get transferred to. My mother then would be fighting for the correct education that i need to get, by me being a special education student. Which she did before in this school, because i was failing badly. Now if this school closes and i get transfered, what is going to be of the iep education i need? My mother is going to go through the same process that she went through before, and my mother has a back surgery, so she cannot go too long walking or sitting down , because her back will hurt her a lot. Also i have a little autistic nephew, so if i get transferred because the school closes, how can i help my mom with him? At New Explorers everyone knows my name and I feel beyond supported, not just me but my family as well.

Niaomi Reyes, Senior

There are only 37 schools in district 7, and 7 of them are high schools including NEHS, can you seriously believe that? NEHS is place in a neighborhood, right next to the projects.

This environment is comforting. We all know each other and who really wants to go to another school and start over, some of us have anxieties that do not allow us to work well. When you have all your friends here. You've bonded with staff here, and made connections with the people. It's going to be hard to just start over with a new counselor, when you've already opened up to someone. Ms.Grevenburg always listens to the ideas we come up with and take them into consideration. The passion she has for the school is bright and extremely noticeable.

Though I am a senior and people assume I don't care about the school, they are wrong. New explorers high school isn't the same high school I walked into when I was a freshman, it is a fun environment I enjoy going to. Saying good morning to my teachers and staff is something I'm going to miss deeply in college. I feel supported in this environment despite having an IEP—the school as really offered me with everything I need for my learning needs. We need more schools like NEHS, not less.

**Oversight Hearing on Community Schools and Renewal Schools**  
**NY City Council Education Committee, Chaired by Council Member Mark Treyger**  
**Tuesday, February 27, 2018, Council Chambers – City Hall**

**Testimony by: Teresa Arboleda**  
**President, Citywide Council on English Language Learners**  
(for identification purposes only)

Thank you for the invitation to provide testimony at today's hearing.

When the Renewal Schools program was announced in November, 2014 there was great hope that the previous administration's destabilizing period of closing schools, with little meaningful thought and planning, was over. While there was much improvement in that at-risk schools were given more resources and opportunities to improve, including making them community schools, we have ended up closing too many of them.

Part of the reasons why some schools need to be closed are the too rigid metrics that over-emphasize standardized test scores and attendance. Consideration must be given to why there is low attendance? Why are scores so low? Although community schools provide social and medical services are families aware that they are available? Are there students with special needs who are not receiving their mandated services? Are there students who are learning English not receiving their mandated services? It's only recently that homeless students are given more opportunities to attend school closer to where they lived. A student who needs to travel a far distance between boroughs to attend school probably will not do well academically. We need to consider more than just test scores and attendance when considering closing a school.

The DOE must not give up on these schools. It is very difficult to recruit and retain teachers in the areas of bilingual education and special education. While there are challenges, steps have been taken to provide teacher certification between states and to work with colleges and universities to facilitate the process. These should be continued.

Families in these communities all want good schools that will educate their children but hesitate to attend a school that has bad word of mouth. Charters have resources to publicize their schools but public schools do not have adequate resources to make the families aware of programs that will benefit their children. Funding must be provided to publicize what is good so that these schools can increase their enrollment.

Schools are not turned around overnight and need more than three years to show marked improvement, especially at the elementary level. Shutting down schools too quickly is not always the best approach and we expect that the DOE will never return to a system that is so destabilizing.



Good morning Mr. Chair,

Congratulations on your new position and nice to see you again. My name is Terrence Winston. I am a Program Director at Counseling in Schools; the proud lead CBO partner at Brooklyn Collegiate HS! Additionally, I'm the co-coordinator for the Coalition for Community School Excellence (CCSE); a cohort comprised of 61 representatives from the lead CBO partners serving the Community Schools Initiative. This coalition serves in an advocacy and accountability capacity.

I am here today testifying with four of my colleagues; to my right is Michelle Yanche, Associate Executive Director for Government and External Relations with Good Shepherd Services; to my far left is Terry Kim, Senior Policy Analyst for Children's Aid Society; Robin Veenstra-Vanderweele, Chief Program Officer from Partnership with Children, and, Jeremy Kaplan, Senior Director from Phipps Neighborhood, Inc.

The three year relationship between the CCSE and the Office of Community Schools has, thus far, been a fruitful collaboration. A primary goal of our joint efforts has been the ongoing clarification of the core components of what constitutes a community school, simultaneously, seeking to elevate the level of service delivery and community engagement. Through this collaborative relationship, we're more productive than operating separately; working from a larger systems level thinking approach to meet the needs of underserved communities throughout the five boroughs. Another concrete example of our advocacy is pushing for differentiated professional development support for the Community School Director role. As articulated in earlier testimony, the CSD has been identified as one "core component" of the community school model. That said, the experience levels of each CSD vary; depending on time served in the role or expertise in particular disciplines salient to the work in an assigned school. A "one size fits all" approach to professional development would not be an appropriate response in trying to meet needs specific to that role or community.

In closing, each school should not "feel" like they're working in isolation. They should know that there are responsive, substantive and nimble systems driven supports in place that's readily accessible. Thank you!

**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: Ramela Stewart Martinez

Address: 1041 Pugsley Avenue

I represent: Bronx HS Federation & Citywide Council on H.S.

Address: 1041 Pugsley Ave, Bronx, NY 10472

**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: February 27, 2018

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Celia Green - CCHS

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

I represent: CCHS

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: 2/27/18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maritza A. Polanco

Address: 295 Fort Washington Ave, Apt 20 NYC 10032

I represent: Parents United

Address: 579 Washington Audubon Ave, NYC 10040

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: 2/27/18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gasemborgia

Address: 549 Audubon Ave. NY 10040

I represent: MYSELF / Parent-United

Address: Sema

**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: 2/27/2018

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lisandra Medina

Address: 159-64 Harlem River Drive #10C NYC

I represent: Parents United 10039

Address: 549 Audubon Ave NYC 10040

**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: Christine Schuch

Address: Community School Director

I represent: UFT

Address: 52 Bway

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: Patrick Joseph

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

I represent: MBPO

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: Dr. Florencia

Address: PO Box 799

I represent: YOUTH & EDUCATION COMMITTEE / CB1211

Address: 500 W 166 St New York NY 10032

**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: Feb 27, 2018

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Samantha Alvarez

Address: 1203 Saint Nicholas Ave, Apt 44, NY NY 10032

I represent: High school for Health Careers & Sciences

Address: 549 Audubon Ave NY NY 10040

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: 2/27/18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: German Sosa

Address: 2874 Grand Concourse Apt B2 Bronx NY 10458

I represent: High School for Health Careers and Sciences (06M468)

Address: 549 Audubon Avenue New York NY 10040

**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: 2/27/18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Saeed Khair

Address: 8345 BROADWAY APT 712 EIMHURST NY 11373

I represent: High School for Health Careers and Sciences (06M468)

Address: 549 Audubon Avenue NY 10040

**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: 2/27/18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Henry Rubio

Address: 40 Rector St. NY, NY

I represent: CSA - Exec Vice-President

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

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. 262  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: Feb 27, 18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kimberly Watkins

Address: 154 W. 93rd St

I represent: CEC3

Address: 154 W 93rd 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: Karen Alford

Address: VEEP Elementary Education

I represent: UFT

Address: 52 Broadway

**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: Jeremy Kaplan

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

I represent: ~~Council~~ Phipps Neighborhoods

Address: 200 Jefferson Ave. Brooklyn

*Done!  
together*

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Panel  
together*

Appearance Card

[ ]

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

in favor  in opposition

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

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Terrace Winston

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

I represent: Counseling in schools

Address: 200 Jefferson Ave. Brooklyn

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Panel  
together*

Appearance Card

[ ]

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

in favor  in opposition

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

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ~~Michelle~~ Michelle Yancey

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

I represent: Good Shepherd Services

Address: 200 Jefferson Ave. Brooklyn

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

*Panel  
together*

Appearance Card

[ ]

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

in favor  in opposition

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

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rosin Veenstra-Vander Weele

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

I represent: PARTNERSHIP WITH CHILDREN

Address: 299 Broadway, Suite 1300

**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: Terry Kim

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

I represent: Childrens Aid Society

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: 2/27/18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Naftuli Moster

Address: 25 W 45th

I represent: YAFFED

Address: Same

**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: 2/27/18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cheryl Watson-Harris

Address: 52 Chambers Street

I represent: New York Department of Education

Address: 52 Chambers Street

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: 2/27/18

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Laura Feijoo

Address: 52 Chambers St, NYC NY 10007

I represent: NYC DOE

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: Randi Levine

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

I represent: Advocates for Children of New York

Address: 151 W. 30th St, 5th Fl, NY, NY 10001

**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: Aimee Horowitz

Address: 1782 E 2nd St, B'klyn NY 11223

I represent: NYC DOE

Address: 52 Chambers Street

**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: Julia Dornier

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

I represent: Coalition for Community School Excellence

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

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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: Terry Kim

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

I represent: Children's Aid Society

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: Leonie Haimson

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

I represent: Class Size Matters

Address: 124 Waverly Pl.

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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: 2/27/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chris Caruso

Address: Executive Div Office

I represent: of Community Schools

Address: DOE

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