



Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

530 West 166th St. Room 6-A, New York, NY 10032

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

Website: www.nyc.gov/mcb12

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

April 29, 2016

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

Dear Chancellor Farina:

At the General Meeting on Tuesday, April 26, 2016 Community Board 12 Manhattan passed a resolution with a vote of (29)In Favor, (1)Opposed, (8)Abstained Community Board 12 Manhattan urges the City Council to form a Taskforce (or Commission), working with the Department of Education, the School Construction Authority, and the Office of the Mayor, to propose reforms to the school planning and staffing process so that students are not disadvantaged by even larger class sizes and even more overcrowded schools in the years ahead.

Whereas: New York City is the fastest-growing large city in the country, according to recent Census data, and yet the DOE has put forward no realistic proposal to address the expanding student population; and

Whereas: According to the latest DOE figures, about half of all public school students – more 550,000 children – are crammed into overcrowded schools; and in D6 our class sizes have increased sharply since 2007 – by more than 13% in grades K-3 – and all grades are far above the Contract for Excellence (“C4E”) mandates; and

Whereas: A Blue Book Working Group convened by the Chancellor made a number of recommendations with respect to capacity formula and reporting, many of which were implemented, but the recommendations to align class size standards with C4E mandates were not granted; and

Whereas: There are 14 elementary- and middle-schools above 100% utilization in District 6, which needs an additional 1,400 seats to get down to a capacity level of 100%, and these statistics themselves are understated inasmuch as they are based on a Blue Book which we know to be flawed; and

Whereas: Many of our District 6 students are forced to eat lunch as early as 10:15am or as late as 2:30pm because there is not enough space in the cafeteria for them to eat at reasonable times; and

Whereas: Many schools do not have rooms for art or music or science, and for schools that have gymnasias at all there is not enough space to have physical education more than once a week; and

Whereas: In many of our schools, students with special needs receive their services in hallways or closets; and

Whereas: 19 Manhattan high school buildings are over 100% capacity, with a collective need of 3,500+ seats; and

Whereas: The current school construction capital has no plans to build new schools in District 6 or high schools in Manhattan; and

Whereas: After two years, DOE still has not determined where most of the 4,900 seats in “class size reduction” category will be sited, even though more than 350,000 students citywide are crammed into classes of 30 or more; and

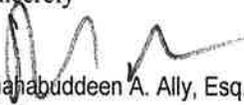
Whereas: We need a more transparent and accurate needs assessment, and better processes for school planning and siting to make the creation of additional school seats more effective and fair; and

Whereas: The Mayor’s new rezoning proposals, recently approved by the NYC Council, to create thousands of new affordable and market-rate housing units in our community and citywide will cause our schools to become even more overcrowded unless schools are built along with new housing, and not years afterwards; now, therefore, be it

Resolved: That Community Board 12, Manhattan urges the City Council to form a Taskforce (or Commission), working with the Department of Education, the School Construction Authority, and the Office of the Mayor, to propose reforms to the school planning and staffing process so that students are not disadvantaged by even larger class sizes and even more overcrowded schools in the years ahead; and be it further

Resolved: That Community Board 12, Manhattan urges that ALL of the recommendations of the Blue Book Working Group be incorporated into the school capacity formula so as accurately to portray current overcrowding, and reduce such conditions going forward.

Sincerely



Shahabuddeen A. Ally, Esq.
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Letitia James, Public Advocate
Hon. Charles Rangel, Congressman
Hon. Bill Perkins, State Senator

Hon. Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Assembly Member
Hon. Guillermo Linares, Assembly Member
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, State Senator