



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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COREY JOHNSON
Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.
District Manager

February 4, 2012

Mr. Benno Schimdt
Chairman
Avenues, The World School
259 Tenth Avenue
New York, New York 10001

Dear Mr. Schimdt:

Manhattan Community Board 4 welcomes the Avenues: The World School (Avenues School) into its district and is confident that its fall 2012 opening will prove beneficial, useful and vital for the community as a whole. We are writing to express community frustration with the admissions and financial aid process as it currently stands. There is a serious concern with the Avenues World School's inability to provide any specific numbers regarding the number of seats potentially allocated to low-income Community District 4 residents in their new pre-k-12, 1,000 student education complex in Chelsea.

Manhattan Community Board 4 would like to share the following concerns:

Preliminary Fees & Information

The Avenue World School uses third-party providers to coordinate their admissions testing and financial aid services. In order to gain admission to the Avenues School all applicants must register with the Educational Records Bureau. Applicants must register with the Schools & Student Services to be considered for financial aid.

The Educational Records Bureau (ERB) administers the *Early Childhood Admissions Assessment* (K-4) at an approximate cost of \$525 and the *Independent School Entrance Exam* (Grade 2-12) at an approximate cost of \$95. These fees are prohibitive for low-income members of Community District 4. The Avenues School has not served as an effective liaison to inform low-income families that a limited number of fee waivers are currently available through the ERB. Furthermore, the Avenues School should coordinate a plan of action to subsidize an increased number of ERB waivers so that more low-income students may take the required entrance exams. Some parents have informed MCB4 that they were denied a waiver.

Schools & Student Services (SSS) by the National Association of Independent Schools charge a nonrefundable \$37 fee to process financial aid requests. The Avenues School should work with SSS to ensure that financial aid fees are not a deterrent to applicants who lack the ability to pay.

Lastly, the \$60 application fee should be waived for low-income applicants.

Early Community & Admissions Outreach

Avenue School has not made a good faith effort to advertise its lower school educational program among low income residents in Community District 4. Effective and long-term admissions recruiting should incorporate outreach at the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten levels where student education and income disparities are in a better position to be equalized and when cost prohibitive ERB assessments are not required. Avenues School has repeatedly expressed its commitment to integrate low-income students into its educational programs and we respectfully request that their commitment be made manifest in its admissions outreach work before the 2012-2013 academic year.

Whatever testing is being given to our residents who apply for admission, a copy of the test, and a discussion of how the test is administered needs to take place in order to make sure that there is no cultural bias in it.

Financial Aid Availability

In its Memorandum of Understanding, the Avenues School committed 30% of its 4 million dollar scholarship fund to residents of Manhattan Community District 4. Even though Avenues School has made \$1.2 million dollars of financial aid available it has provided no numerical threshold, income bracket, or formula so that parents can determine if they will be able to pursue an Avenues School education for their child.

The following questions remain unanswered:

Will the Avenue School provide full financial aid to families who are designated by SSS to have an unmet need of \$39,000?

It currently appears that if 1.2 million dollars in financial aid are allocated to the low-income students admitted in 2012-2013 (who conceivably remain for 12 years), there would be no funding available to provide financial aid in the future. If \$1.2 million dollars is available to low-income MCB4 residents in any given year, how does the Avenues School propose to grow that fund on a yearly basis so that incoming students may also receive financial aid in the future?

Manhattan Community Board 4 looks forward to working with the Avenues, The World School to ensure an integrated and positive inaugural academic year.

Sincerely,

Corey Johnson
Chair

Jesse Campoamor
Co-Chair
Quality of Life Committee

David Pincus
Co-Chair
Quality of Life Committee

cc: Electeds
Gardner P. Dunnan, Ray Bordwell - Avenues: The World School