



The City of New York

Queens Community Board 11

Serving the Communities of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston, Hollis Hills
Little Neck and Oakland Gardens

Jerry Iannece Chairperson / **Susan Seinfeld** District Manager

February 2, 2013

Resolution on Opposition to the Discontinuation of Beacon Program at M.S.158 Marie Curie Middle School by Community Board 11Q

WHEREAS, Community Board 11 of Queens is obligated to safeguard the wellbeing of our community and must oppose any actions that will cause irrevocable damage to our community and its future prosperity;

WHEREAS, studies, including one done by the Harvard Graduate School of Education, has found that participation in after-school programs is associated with better attitudes toward school and higher educational aspirations, better school attendance and less tardiness, less disciplinary action (e.g., suspension), lower drop-out rates, better performance in school (as measured by achievement test scores and grades), greater on-time promotion, improved homework completion, and engagement in learning;

WHEREAS, Mayor Bloomberg himself on January 24, 2012, testified before the State Assembly Ways and Means Committee and State Senate Finance Committee that “what happens after the final school bell of the day rings is as important to students as what goes on in the classrooms”;

WHEREAS, as the only Beacon program in Community Board 11, the Beacon Program at M.S. 158Q has been an integral part of our community and the many schools that feed participants into the programs. For nearly twenty years since its inception, this Beacon program has served THOUSANDS of participants;

WHEREAS, despite the additional challenges created by the possibility of closure last year, the Beacon Program at M.S. 158Q has not only met its targeted middle school participant quota of one hundred and fifty this year, but has once again exceeded it;

WHEREAS, the Beacon Program at M.S. 158Q currently serves over eight hundred participants with an annual budget of approximately three hundred and fifty thousand dollars;

WHEREAS, the Beacon Program at M.S. 158Q, at its inception, ran with a budget of four hundred thousand and despite the inflation and cost of living adjustments over twenty years has been able to provide the same high quality of service twenty years later with a smaller budget;

WHEREAS, the Beacon Program at M.S. 158Q has consistently achieved, upheld, and surpassed the Beacon Core Elements of: 1. Academic Enrichment 2. Career Awareness/School to Work Transition 3. Recreation/Health and Fitness 4. Culture/Art 5. Civic Engagements/Community Building and 6. Life Skills;

WHEREAS, the Beacon Program at M.S. 158Q makes it possible for multiple income families or single-income families to place their child in a supervised, safe, and nurturing after-school environment, thus, the Beacon Program at M.S. 158Q can be seen as a method of economic improvement and not just an expenditure. As Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer stated, "These are dollars that allow parents to go to work and pay taxes; cutting them will only force more families to seek public assistance and add to taxpayer costs," and;

WHEREAS, according to the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey, approximately 1/4 of households in Community Board 11 have an income under \$40,000. and would be financially impacted to have to pay for tuition-based private after-school.

WHEREAS, the Department of Youth and Child Development has never met with any community leaders or organizations regarding this closure and has not shown just cause or empirical evidence to claim that the Beacon at M.S. 158 is not necessary.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that Queens Community Board 11 urges Mayor Bloomberg and the Department of Youth and Community Development to meet with our local elected and/or community leaders to find solutions to allow the Beacon Program at M.S. 158Q to continue to provide essential services to our community and;

That Queens Community Board 11 asks that Mayor Bloomberg recognize the invaluable services that Beacon Programs offer to our children, families, and overall long term prosperity of our community and no longer view this program as expendable and:

That with grateful appreciation for its funding assistance this past year, Queens Community Board 11 asks that the New York City Council continue to support our efforts and should it be necessary, continue to fund the Beacon Program at M.S. 158Q and:

That Queens Community Board 11 will continue to do all in its power to oppose the scheduled closure of Middle School 158 Beacon Program in Queens.