



## MEYER LEVIN SCHOOL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

5909 Beverly Road, Brooklyn NY 11203

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

*"Excellence without Excuses"*



Gauntlett Mighty  
Assistant Principal

Jamie Hendrickson  
Principal

Sybil Schloss  
Assistant Principal

July 25, 2022

Dear Members of the Districting Commission,

My name is Jamie Hendrickson and I am writing in regards to the recently released maps for Council District 45, in which I work as the proud principal of the Meyer Levin School for the Performing Arts. Over the past two years I have worked in collaboration with the residents, business owners, politicians and city agencies of the East Flatbush community. I have seen how important our school is to the district in providing quality education to our neighboring families in this predominantly Caribbean-immigrant community of East Flatbush and Remsen Village.

Working as an educator for 14 years has taught me how important local schools and education institutions are to the foundation of a neighborhood. I've connected with numerous parents, neighbors, and wide ranges of families throughout their children's educational career. Moving our primary school outside of Council District 45 will tear the fabric of our children's futures because it will no longer guarantee that East Flatbush students will receive the same level of funding and education as their parents and neighbors have previously been afforded decades prior. The burden on parents and caregivers will increase two-fold. Siblings will be separated by this new map. Those in grade school will be in a different district from their older siblings.

By cutting out East Flatbush and Remsen Village of the district, Meyer Levin will no longer be able to partner with our premiere CBO Elite Learners. We credit our come back from the pandemic to the efforts and resources of our staff in collaboration with the Elite team and Council District 45. Because of them, we were able to reimagine the school experience by revitalizing the sports program, offering students additional options for electives during the school day, implemented safe passage for student arrival and kept our doors open 7 days a week until 9 pm. To lose the partnership of our premiere CBO and the efforts of Council District 45 would cripple the vision that is clearly understood by all Meyer Levin stakeholders. Under the leadership of Council Member Farrah Louis, Council District 45 has supported massive clean-up efforts and upgrades to ensure that the Meyer Levin School community is equipped to offer an experience that prepares students to be transformational citizens who will take charge of their futures and have an impact on the global community.

According to Chapter 2-A, Section 52 of the New York City Charter, subparagraph (c), "District lines shall keep intact neighborhoods and communities with established ties of common interest and association, whether historical, economical, or other." The preliminary maps clearly show that an established common tie (e.g. Meyer Levin Junior High School, Brooklyn Science & Engineering Academy and Samuel J. Tilden High School) are drawn outside of the historical District 45 maps. Under my leadership as principal, Meyer Levin has forged relationships with the Tilden Campus focused on My Brother's Keeper and extending Steel Pan opportunities to students at both levels. This was done with the support of Council Member Farrah Louis. This alone re-enforces the need for our school communities to maintain their presence in Council District 45, as we prepare the next generation of leaders and professionals.

Altering the district lines from its historical coordinates compromises the growth and development of Black and Brown communities that fought to keep this, and neighboring communities' whole over the years. The proposed map would mean Council District 45 loses staple educational institutions like *P.S. 244K*, *Meyer Levin Junior High School*, *Brooklyn Science & Engineering Academy* and *Samuel J. Tilden High School*—which encompasses *Kurt Hahn*, *It Takes a Village* (ITAVA) and *Cultural Academy for the Arts and Sciences* (CAAS) which have been in the East Flatbush community for generations. Removing these schools drastically distorts educational opportunities and is detrimental to the development and growth of our youth and families that will provide us with future leaders that speak many different languages, multicultural, and enriched with diversity from each culture represented within the district.

Keeping our schools in Council District 45 allows us to be able to take advantage of keeping the neighborhood within its historical context intact as it has been for generations and will further our scholars potential and aide families from having to travel an inordinate distance to other schools to fight for their enrollment. The proposed map disregards these aspects of our needs, and we demand that the changes are revisited to bring back Meyer Levin School for the Performing Arts into Council District 45.

I hope this commission will take the time to revisit the maps to prevent the loss of the momentum and gains made in partnership with Council District 45 that can also affect our funding and diminish the impactful educational experience we have created to move the community forward.



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Sincerely,

*Jamie Hendrickson*

Principal, Meyer Levin School for the Performing Arts