

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DOE and DVS Name Building in Honor of Fallen Bronx Veteran

*The Department of Education District 7 Administration Building will be named in honor of
Sgt. Jose M. Velez*

NEW YORK –[The New York City Department of Education](#) (DOE) and [Department of Veterans' Services](#) (DVS) announced today that the DOE's District 7 Administration Building in the Bronx will be named after fallen local veteran Sgt. Jose M. Velez. The building at 501 Courtlandt Avenue represents a diverse district comprised of 41 schools.

Velez was assigned to the 773rd Transportation Company, Army Reserves, Fort Totten, NY. He was 35 when he died on June 9, 2006 from injuries sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his Humvee in Kirkuk, Iraq.

“What better way to honor the life and service of Sgt. Jose Velez than in the heart of his home—the Bronx. His dedication to serving our country and his commitment to protecting others will continue to live on in District 7 and throughout our great City,” said **Schools Chancellor Meisha Porter**.

“Sgt. Velez emblemizes the best of New York City and our country. He heeded his country's call and worked selflessly to protect our nation. His name will now serve as a living reminder in his home borough of the Bronx of his honor, dignity, and sacrifices,” said **J. Phillip Thompson, Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives**.

“Twenty years ago, marked the start of the Global War on Terrorism, the longest War in US history. Those who served and lost all, such as Sgt. Velez, deserve our eternal gratitude for their efforts to ensure a better future for the American people. Today, we honor him as a brave and heroic New Yorker and Bronx resident with deep roots with this borough. His name and actions will live on in the building being named for him,” said **DVS Commissioner James Hendon**.

The building naming is part of an ongoing effort led by DVS to mark the 20th Anniversary of the Global War on Terror and to honor New Yorkers who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving during the conflict. Over 7,000 US Military Service Members have died in the war, 93 were from the City of New York.

“Jose was an amazing human with a wonderful sense of humor and warm personality. He was the kind of person who would give you the shirt off his back,” said **Sgt. Rafael Rodriguez**, who served with Sgt. Velez in Iraq. “I know he would be proud that this school building was being named after him because there was no one that mattered more to him than his children. This cements his legacy and the sacrifice that he made for all of us.”

Veterans who would like to know more about DVS can call (212) 416 2520 or visit www.nyc.gov/vets.

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About the New York City Department of Veterans' Services

The NYC Department of Veterans' Services' mission is to connect, mobilize, and empower New York City's Veteran community to foster purpose-driven lives for US Military Service Members—past and present—in addition to their caregivers, survivors, and families. We assist NYC Veteran community members on issues that include, but are not limited to: employment, housing, food security, wellbeing, benefits, culture, and targeted advocacy. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/vets, call (212) 416-5250, email connect@veterans.nyc.gov, or follow us on social media @nycveterans.