



THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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OFFICE OF NEW SCHOOLS

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June 20, 2006

Vincent Prezioso
President, Northeast Bronx Association Inc

Dear Mr. Prezioso,

I am writing to confirm the Department of Education's plans regarding the Sports Professions High School, and the school yard at X144, the Michelangelo School.

As you know, the Department has worked hard to find the best possible place to house the Sports Professions High School, given that the school is outgrowing its current facility and its long-term facility is still under construction. The Department announced its intention to build transportable classroom units on the play yard at X144 in late April, after having initially targeted a different play yard. With your input, input from the Sports Professions PTA, and input from other community members and leaders, we continued to investigate a number of other alternatives to try to find a way to house the school that would not require use of the X144 play yard. Unfortunately, none of those alternatives are feasible to house the school for this September, and the Department must proceed with the development of the X144 site. As of last week, the construction contract has been awarded, and construction will commence shortly.

The most promising alternative was the prospect of using the parking lot at the Antin Place DOE site, given that in May the Community Board 11 reversed its longstanding opposition to the use of that site to house transportable classrooms. Although Saint Barnabus Medical Center - who has a lease for parking on the school's lot - was supportive and willing to use different parking if a reasonable alternative was identified, the first outdoor lot required eviction of the existing parking tenants. This would have been difficult and slow, not to mention unpopular, making that option not possible. The second parking lot you identified two weeks ago was more feasible as an alternate parking site (i.e. parking spaces were readily available); unfortunately, however, by that time, in early June, it was too late for the Department to shift to a new site and complete the necessary work on the Antin place site in time for the start of school in September. In the end, although all parties demonstrated good faith and flexibility in pursuing alternatives to X144, the Department must proceed with the placement of the transportable classrooms at X144.

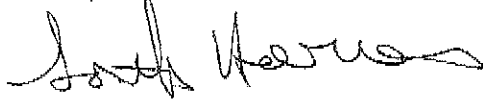
The Department is committed to addressing the concerns you and others have raised with the site, and ensuring that the temporary placement of the school is as constructive as possible for both the school and the local community. As such, the Department commits to the following aspects of its plan:

- o The complex of transportable classrooms will include nine (9) transportable units, each of which contains two classrooms. The site will be entirely contained to the play yard (i.e. the playground and playground equipment are not part of the site design), will be surrounded by a fence, and will have a guard stand and guard at the entrance in order to monitor student entrance and exit.
- o Once Sports Professions High School moves to its new facility, which is expected to happen for the fall of 2008, the complex will not be reused for another purpose. Instead, the transportable classrooms will be removed, and the school yard will be restored to its current condition within 3 months of move-out.
- o The maximum enrollment of Sports Professions while it is located at the X144 play yard will be 350 students. More students will not be enrolled.

- o The DOE will facilitate the establishment of an oversight committee, including the principals of both X144 and Sports Professions, the Local Instructional Superintendent, yourself, and the captain of the local police precinct. If the oversight committee believes other representatives will be helpful, they can of course be included. The goal of the committee will be to assure good school-community relations, particularly to develop strategies to assure that students moving to or from school are not disruptive for the neighborhood: we suggest the group meet at least once a quarter.
- o In addition, the DOE is pursuing the possibility of opening the X144 gym in the evenings, on weekends, and over the summer, to allow for community use of the facility during designated hours and with supervision. We do not yet have a final resolution, but I will update you when we get final resolution on this access.

I recognize that locating Sports Professions at the X144 play yard is not the result that you or the Association supported. Maintaining and sustaining the Sports Professions High School until the completion of its permanent facility is a priority for the Department, and we do not have other feasible alternatives. That said, I appreciate the spirit in which we worked together to pursue other alternatives, and believe that through continued collaboration we can assure that this temporary arrangement causes minimal disruption to your community. To the extent there are other issues involving the schools, we are committed to trying to resolve them: please let me know and we will try to address them in an expeditious way.

Thank you,



Garth Harries
CEO, Office of New Schools
NYC Department of Education

Cc: James Vacca, City Councilman
Jeff Klein, State Senator
Naomi Rivera, State Assemblywoman
John Fratta, Community Board President
Carl Heastie, State Assemblyman
Laura Rodriguez, Superintendent
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Sharon Greenberger, SCA President
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