



COMMUNITY DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL 3

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District 3 Community Superintendent

April 19, 2010

Panel for Educational Policy
52 Chambers Street
New York NY 10007

Re: CDEC3 Statement in Support of PS 452 and PS 452 EIS

Dear Members of the Panel for Educational Policy:

The members of CDEC3 are excited about the creation of the new school, PS 452 and give our unwavering support to ensure that it will be a success. We would like to acknowledge all of the hard work and support by the Department of Education, the community, and our elected officials to make this new school possible. Thank you for beginning to recognize formally the elementary overcrowding needs in the lower portion of District 3 and for working toward a near and longer-term resolution to this acute problem. We would also like publicly to thank the cooperation of the four schools that are currently in the 044 building – The Anderson School, The Computer School, West Prep Academy and MS 44 for working with the community to help to locate this new school in their building.

As such, CDEC3 unequivocally supports the establishment of PS 452 with 3 classes within the 044 building starting in September 2010. Additionally, CDEC3 supports the major principles of the PS452 EIS.

However, there are some key points that we would hope to have the DOE address as we move forward in this process.

First, it is important to ensure that the location, classrooms and support facilities for PS 452 within the 044 building are age appropriate to support and to nurture its early childhood population. We believe that there may be better alternatives within the building for the kindergarten children than co-locating them on the 2nd floor with middle school students. If they are located on the 2nd floor, we urge that the DOE allocate funds for the creation of new bathrooms and other support facilities that are appropriate for this kindergarten group.

Second, and as per CDEC3's unanimous resolution dated 2/24/10, PS 452 needs to be at least double its current size going forward as the current 3 section school accommodates fewer than a third of this year's waitlisted kids. And the coming years will be much worse. We therefore reiterate our prior unanimous resolution and call on the DOE to enlarge PS 452 to seven sections per grade starting in 2011/2012.

Third, on March 17th, the CEC voted in favor of a "proportional allocation" enrollment policy for 452 to include waitlisted children from both the 87 and 199 zones. The DOE allocated seats on this basis but then employed a "use it or lose it" policy whereby if a 199 zoned child does not take up a given space in 452 the seat reverts to an 87 family. We would ask that you revisit this policy to ensure that the ten seats initially allocated to PS199 families remain allocated to 199, and that the spirit of our March 17 vote is adhered to.

Fourth, we urge that the sibling preferences be retained in the admission in the event that families are zoned out of their current school. Under this plan siblings from those families will still be considered as siblings in the zone. Elementary school children who will be entering kindergarten beginning in September 2010, and whose zoned elementary school will be different from those of older siblings based on the zoning changes that the DOE will accommodate all such children and their siblings at the elementary schools in accordance with DOE policy regarding sibling priority.

Fifth, this longer-term enlargement of the new school and the solving of the current elementary school overcrowding crisis should be via the immediate building of new seats in the area. It should not be done by setting our kids and parents against each other or by cramming more kids and schools into already inadequate existing facilities or by mortgaging our middle school seats. The 044 building is the only short-term solution for the incubation of PS452 and we are grateful that the DOE and the four schools currently in the building are accommodating that.

All involved agree however, that the 044 building is not a sustainable solution and long-term home for the 3 remaining schools not to mention the students in West Prep Academy who absolutely must be accommodated in a sensitive manner. Again, as per our prior resolution dated February 24, 2010, CDEC3 is calling on the DOE and our elected officials immediately to deliver on a plan to finance and to build, lease or develop a new larger home of some 800-1000 seats. This building also should be separate and distinct from any new building established as part of the Riverside Center development process.

The families, students, and faculty from all the schools involved deserve to have their promises and expectations of an adequate facility and an exceptional education realized. CDEC3 unequivocally supports the new PS 452, appreciates the opportunity to have its views considered, and looks forward to working with all involved to ensure the success of the new PS 452, the four neighboring schools in the 044 Building, and all of our District 3 schools.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Noah E. Gotbaum". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Noah E. Gotbaum
President – CDEC3
On Behalf of Community District Education Council 3

Cc: Elizabeth Rose
Dr. Roser Salavert
D.J. Sheppard