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February 5, 2014

Carmen Fariña
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education
Tweed Courthouse
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chancellor Fariña,

I wanted to bring your attention two co-locations in my district, which were proposed in August and rapidly approved by the Panel for Educational Policy on October 15, 2013 under your predecessor, Chancellor Dennis Walcott. I strongly oppose both of these co-locations, and I urge you to take the opportunity to review these co-locations as soon as possible.

1. The co-location of **Success Academy**, a K-4 Charter school, at 411 Pearl Street with Murry Bergtraum High School for Business Careers and Urban Assembly School for Emergency Management.

The Murry Bergtraum building is currently home to two high schools: Murry Bergtraum High School for Business Careers, which is considered a "Struggling School" by the Department of Education, and the Stephen T. Mather Building Arts & Craftsmanship High School. Stephen T. Mather has been co-located for the past year, but is to be switched next year with Urban Assembly School for Emergency Management due to the realization that there were not adequate facilities for the Building Arts & Craftsmanship program. To this mix, the Department of Education is now proposing to add a K-4 Charter school, Success Academy.

We are greatly concerned about the inappropriateness of co-locating K-4 students with high school students given that the first floor is primarily occupied by spaces on which Murry Bergtraum depends, including their auditorium. I also do not believe combining high school students with kindergartners in one building is an effective learning environment; I know there are buildings co-located in this manner elsewhere in the city, but the developmental and physical differences between the two populations are very big.

Furthermore, I have heard from constituents who live both in Smith Houses (NYCHA) and in the Financial District who are concerned what the co-location of a Charter school means for Murry Bergtraum's future as a high school.

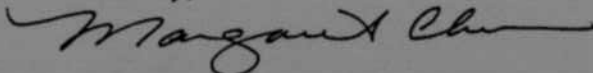
2. The co-location of a new **CTE Model School** partnering with CUNY's Borough of Manhattan Community College as well as American Association of Advertising Agencies with University Neighborhood High School (UNHS) at 200 Monroe Street.

While I have no objection to the CTE model or what is being proposed, the community is extremely concerned about the practical logistics of fitting two full sized high schools in this building. University High School has seen tremendous progress under Principal Collins (it has improved from a D to an A in the last several years) and currently has the benefit of a resident community-based organization in the building. The first two years of the co-location of the CTE school may work; however, as the CTE school reaches its full size, I am concerned that both schools will have to begin making very severe sacrifices in order to share the facilities. UNHS may have to give up its enrichment and afterschool programs; lab hours will have to be reduced to the bare minimum of Regents requirements; and physical education will be very limited.

Further, the UNHS building is quite far from BMCC. It is not easy to travel from UNHS to BMCC. I do not understand why – since the CTE school is a *high school* partnering with BMCC mere blocks from Murry Bergtraum – the Department of Education did not decide to co-locate the school in the Murry Bergtraum building instead. I believe that this would in fact be the better location for the CTE school instead of the Success Academy Charter Elementary School.

I am attaching correspondence I sent to your predecessor on these colocations. I urge you to review these colocations and put a halt to these plans. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 212-788-7259 if you have any questions regarding this issue.

Sincerely,



Margaret S. Chin
Council Member, District 1
New York City Council