

Russell Squire
Chair

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District Manager



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**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Youth, Education, and Libraries Committee
Thursday, January 27, 2022 - 6:30 PM
Conducted Remotely via Zoom**

Minutes

CB8 Members Present: Vanessa Aronson, Taina Borrero, Elizabeth Rose, Barry Schneider, and Rami Sigal.

Rami shared his perspective on the current state of COVID-19 in public schools:

- Attendance levels in schools are nearly back to pre-winter break levels
- Teacher's attendance is almost back to normal as well
- Many COVID cases among students occurred in the weeks prior to the winter break
- The week of January 24 is Regent's week, and there is typically a non-attendance day for students but the DOE mandated attendance
- Some schools gave midterm exams
- Student walkouts protesting schools remaining open were relatively minimal

Kevin Rogers, a staffer from Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright's office reported:

- Assembly Member Seawright was in Albany for an education budget hearing
- The Assembly Member questioned NYC Department of Education Chancellor Banks about what teachers are doing in classrooms around COVID protocols, how mass at-home COVID test kits are being distributed, and the Chancellor's vision for New York City public schools.
- The Assembly Member heard from principals in the district about a shortage of new teachers and she asked the Chancellor about what he is doing to ensure that we are onboarding new educators.

The committee had an open discussion on the new DOE chancellor, David Banks

- The committee decided CB8 should send a letter to Chancellor Banks outlining our educational priorities
- Childcare and diversity in schools are the major issues we would like to convey

Taina Borrero and Rami Sigal, Co-Chairs

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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan

Chancellor David C. Banks
New York City Department of Education
52 Chambers St
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chancellor Banks,

We are writing on behalf of Community Board 8 Manhattan (CB8M), which encompasses the Upper East Side and Roosevelt Island. The Board would like to first congratulate you on your new position and wish you great success as Chancellor.

For the past several years, CB8M has recognized education as one of the top issues affecting the community in our District Needs Statement and we would like to share our educational priorities with you:

1. The need for more school seats

Our district has become a hotspot for new development over the past decade which has led to an influx of new families and specifically, families with young children. This influx has stretched our childcare infrastructure to its breaking point for families with children 0-4. While we applaud then-Mayor de Blasio's Universal 3-K initiative, families in our community are still unable to secure a 3-K seat as the few 3-k seats we do have fill up quickly and the private childcare and 3-K options are extensively oversubscribed. Families have reported to our Board office that the DOE has assigned seats miles away from our district, creating an accessibility issue for working families in CB8 that do not have the time to traverse across Manhattan for childcare. This issue is also very prevalent on Roosevelt Island. We also ask that the School Construction Authority identify the location and timing for the additional 865 elementary and middle school seats that have been allocated for our community and deliver those seats as soon as possible.

2. Diversity in our schools

Building off the issue above, it is no secret that New York City schools are deeply segregated. Our community recognizes the value of increasing diversity in our schools while also ensuring any student in our district has the opportunity to attend a school in their neighborhood.

Thank you for taking the time to understand the issues our community is facing. CB8M looks forward to working with you during your time as Chancellor and we would be happy to assist with any needs that may arise.

Again, congratulations and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Russell Squire

Taina Borrero and Rami Sigal

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Chair

Taina Borrero and Rami Sigal
Co-Chairs, Youth, Education and Libraries Committee

cc: Honorable Eric Adams, Mayor of the City of New York
Honorable Carolyn Maloney, 12th Congressional District Representative
Honorable Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28th Senatorial District
Honorable José M. Serrano, NYS Senator, 29th Senatorial District
Honorable Dan Quart, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member 76th Assembly District
Honorable Julie Menin, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District
Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District