



## Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

530 West 166<sup>th</sup> St. 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10032

Phone: (212) 568-8500, Fax: (212) 740-8197

Eleazar Bueno, Chairperson  
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

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March 30th, 2021

Hon. Lorraine Grillo  
President  
NYC School Construction Authority  
30-30 Thompson Avenue  
Long Island City, NY 11101

Re: Resolution supporting the construction of a new school building or buildings for PS18M and PS/MS 278M but with reservations regarding SCA's site selection process and community engagement.

Dear President, Grillo:

At the General Meeting on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, Community Board 12 Manhattan passed the following resolution with a vote of 32 in favor, 1 opposed, 2 abstentions, and 1, not voting, acknowledging the need for and supporting the proposed construction of a new, state-of-the-art school building or buildings to house PS18M and PS/MS 278M, and urging the School Construction Authority to engage the community board and all stakeholders at the initiation of planning for future new school projects in Washington Heights and Inwood.

**WHEREAS:** The NYC School Construction Authority (SCA) provided Community Board 12-Manhattan ("CB12M") with written notice (the "Notice") dated February 12, 2021, received February 22, 2021, of site selection of 3761 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Block 2198, Lots 1 and 5) (the "Site") for the proposed construction of a new approximately 860-seat primary and intermediary school in Community School District No.6 which will replace the private premises currently leased to house PS8 and PS/MS 278M (the "Proposed Project"); and

**WHEREAS:** Under the SCA Act CB12M has 45 days from the date of the Notice to submit written comments to SCA on the site plan. The deadline for submitting comments is March 29, 2021. The Notice states that all comments will be taken into consideration in SCA's final decision regarding the Proposed Project. After comments are received, SCA must obtain approval from the City Council to purchase the Site, negotiate a purchase agreement, close on the acquisition of the Site, and design and construct the new school building in time for use and occupancy September 2024; and

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**WHEREAS:** The Committee Chair also reviewed the Notice, summarized comments on how the construction of the new school might impact funds available to undertake repairs at other district schools, a contingency plan for the students if the new school is not completed on time, justification for relocating the schools, efforts made to renew the current leases, the status of the current facilities once they are vacated by the schools, why co-locating the two school is required, who was involved in the site selection process, when were plans to relocate communicated to the school superintendent, and what efforts were made to inform and include parents and students. A combined list of the comments generated by Y&E and Land Use were provided to CB12M's District Manager to forward to SCA in preparation for the discussion scheduled for the March 2021 Y&E monthly meeting; and

**WHEREAS:** On March 8, 2020, representatives of the SCA and the Department of Education ("DOE") attended the Y&E committee meeting to discuss the Notice, the Site, and the Proposed Project. The Land Use Chair and Assistant Chair also attended the meeting. SCA stated that the lease for the premises currently housing PS18M and PS/MS278M expired in 2019 and that a five-year lease extension was negotiated. The current lease expires in 2024. SCA also stated that the landlord will not execute further lease extensions and is not willing to sell the properties; and

**WHEREAS:** SCA undertook the site selection process in concert with its professional consultant but without close coordination with CB12M, teachers, parents, or students and is presenting only one site for consideration, not a choice between two or more viable sites for which the pros and cons of each are summarized and presented to all stakeholder for review and comment, and

**WHEREAS:** Interested parties can email comments on the Site and the Proposed Project to [sites@nycsca.org](mailto:sites@nycsca.org) and can also refer proposed sites for the new school to that email address. SCA states that all sites referred will be considered if it does not obtain City Council approval, it cannot move forward with the Proposed Project at the Site. SCA cautions that although in 30 years it has never missed an opening date for a new school, it is important to keep in mind that the new school must be ready for use in September 2024, Hon. Lorraine Grillo, President and that it will take approximately one year to design the school and approximately two to three years to complete construction, and

**WHEREAS:** While the need for a new school building is apparent given the pending lease expirations and there is support for students, parents, and teachers having access to a new, state-of-the-art educational facility, there are great concerns with and reservations regarding SCA's the site selection process, the failure to include community stakeholder in the process, and the location of the proposed site, therefore be it

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**RESOLVED:** Community Board 12, Manhattan acknowledges the need for and supports the proposed construction of a new, state-of-the-art school building or buildings to house PS18M and PS/MS 278M but expresses deep reservations with the site selection process used by the NYC School Construction Authority and urges SCA and the Department of Education to dramatically increase its engagement of stakeholders and take all actions feasible to address their concerns concerning the site selection process, the Site, and the Proposed Project, and be it further

**RESOLVED:** Community Board 12, Manhattan strongly urges the School Construction Authority to engage the community board and all stakeholders at the initiation of planning for future new school projects in Washington Heights and Inwood to ensure that all parties are adequately informed and have sufficient opportunity to provide their input before critical decisions are finalized.

Sincerely,



Eleazar Bueno

Chairperson

cc: Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor  
Hon. Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate  
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Comptroller  
Hon. Brian Benjamin, State Senator  
Hon. Robert Jackson, State Senator  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President

Hon. Al Taylor, Assembly Member  
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Assembly Member  
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member  
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member  
Hon. Richard Carranza, NYC DOE, Chancellor