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COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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January 26, 2016

Hon. Bill de Blasio
Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Carmen Fariña
Chancellor
Department of Education
Tweed Court House
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Fariña:

At its Full Board meeting January 21, 2016, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

Resolution Calling for the Creation of a Working Group for 75 Morton Street and for the Sharing of Demographic and Test Data by Program for Three District 2 Middle Schools

Whereas:

1. In 2008 members of the Manhattan Community Board 2 (CB2), Community Education Council District 2 (CECD2), parents, and elected officials began advocating for the acquisition of the building located at 75 Morton Street for a new school;
2. As a result of the advocacy efforts the School Construction Authority (SCA) agreed to purchase the building in 2012 for a public, non-charter middle school;
3. CB2 and CECD2 formed the joint 75 Morton Street Task Force shortly after the announcement of the purchase to ensure timely development of the school by the SCA;
4. Parents and education advocates, including members of CECD2 and CB2 (“the Community”), held a series of meetings in 2013 to put forth a recommendation to the NYC Department of Education (DOE) on the grade configuration of the school as a single mid-size (600-700 students) sixth through eighth-grade public, non-charter middle school and a small (70-100 students) District 75 school for children who are diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD);
5. In an unprecedented manner, both the SCA and DOE have been receptive to the input from the Community, agreed to a single sixth through eighth-grade middle school, and collaborated with the Community meaningfully in the development of the school to date;
6. The school at 75 Morton Street is scheduled to open in September 2017;

7. CB2 and CECD2 have been informed by the DOE of the new process in which a Working Group of parents and DOE representatives is established to assist with the development of a new school;
8. The Community finds problematic the timeline for the creation of the Working Group and hiring of a new principal, both of which are scheduled to occur in less than one year from the opening of the school;
9. Members of CB2 and CECD2 are already communicating closely with the District 2 Superintendent and central staff from the DOE in the development of the school, serving as a de facto Working Group;
10. The establishment of a formal Working Group would allow community education leaders from CB2 and CECD2 to represent community input to the DOE and allow for a greater level of community partnership with the DOE in planning the 75 Morton Street school;
11. Families begin researching middle schools in September of 5th grade with the application due in early December;
12. The school building will not be ready for tours or open houses in September 2016, when families will be researching middle schools;
13. To ensure a successful start of the school it is critical that a principal be identified by September 2016 and the school be in the Middle School Directory;
14. A precedence for establishing a Working Group to participate in the selection of a principal and for hiring a principal a full year ahead of the opening of a new school exists in West End Secondary School in District 3;
15. Understanding how admissions impact a school community is critical to the successful launch of the long awaited 75 Morton Middle School;
16. In January 2016, the DOE initiated a zoning analysis for 75 Morton;
17. Within District 2, three middle schools have multiple programs with separate admissions methods, including admission priority to zoned students; and,
18. The DOE website provides access to detailed demographic and test result data by school, but not by program;

Therefore be it resolved that Manhattan, Community Board 2:

1. Urges the Department of Education to establish the Working Group as soon as possible but no later than the end of January 2016;
2. Recommends the membership of the Working Group include representatives from CB2 and CECD2 at a minimum;
3. Recommends one of the responsibilities of the Working Group be to recommend candidates for the principal;
4. Urges the DOE to begin recruiting candidates and the Working Group to participate in identifying these candidates during Spring 2016, so that the principal can be selected by the first day of September 2016;
5. Urges the DOE going forward to include members of this Working Group in all appropriate planning decisions involving the 75 Morton School, so that true community partnership can be achieved between the DOE and the community education representatives within the Working Group; and,
6. Requests that the DOE provide *in a timely manner* demographic and test result data for each program at M104 Simon Baruch Middle School, M131 Sun Yat Sen Middle School and M167 Robert F. Wagner Middle School.

VOTE: Unanimous with 36 Board Members in favor.

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

Sincerely,



Tobi Bergman, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan

TB/EM



Jeannine Kiely, Chair
Schools and Education Committee
Community Board #2, Manhattan

- c: Hon. Jerrold L. Nadler, Congressman
 Hon. Deborah Glick, State Assembly Member
 Hon. Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator
 Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
 Hon. Corey Johnson, Council Member