

CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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LESLIE BOGHOSIAN MURPHY
Chair

NELLY GONZALEZ
Acting District Manager

June 22, 2026

Kamar Samuels
Office of the Chancellor
NYC Public Schools
52 Chambers Street, Room 320
New York, NY 10007

Re: Honoring Retirement of Principal Bob Bender of P.S. 11 – 320 W. 21st Street

Dear Chancellor Samuels,

It is with tremendous gratitude and pride that Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) at its June 3rd Full Board meeting, by a vote of 40 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible, commends Bob Bender on his well-deserved retirement from his position as Principal at the P.S. 11 Sarah J. Garnet School, located at 320 W. 21st Street in Chelsea.

Principal Bender is well-known in the district for his leadership around Diversity Equity and Inclusion, strong community partnerships, collaboration with local elected officials, and innovative programmatic leadership (including the expansion of social-emotional learning, literacy, and mathematics).

Over his twenty one years at P.S. 11 Bob has managed to build a close knit community both within and around the school through a leadership style focused on being kind, gentle and grateful without sacrificing accountability. When Bob first joined P.S. 11 it was a Title 1 school with barely 400 students and when he retires this June, the school will be one of the largest, most socioeconomically diverse elementary schools in Manhattan.

Principal Bender's innovative leadership has served an astonishing number of community members. During his 21 years at P.S. 11, over 15,000 students passed through the building under

his tenure. Over this same period, Reading proficiency grew from just over 50% to 84%, while Mathematics proficiency grew comparably from 60% to 83%!

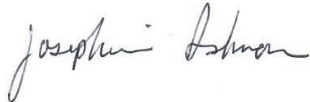
Perhaps one of the strongest testaments to Principal Bender's work can be seen in his response to the state of emergency that was declared in New York City in October 2022 due to the large increase in the number of students and families seeking asylum in our city. Bob led the school community in the support of hundreds of students and families, collaborated with local shelters and City agencies, and leveraged his community to provide wrap around services for this newly arrived, at risk population.

Although Principal Bender will be sorely missed by this community, we sincerely thank him for his dogged, steadfast leadership and wish him a joyful retirement. Principal Bender fundamentally shaped the character of MCB4's school community. He leaves a legacy of compassion and excellence that will resonate throughout Chelsea and New York City Schools District 2 for many years to come.

Sincerely,



Leslie Boghosian Murphy
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Josephine Ishmon
Co-Chair
Arts, Culture, Education
& Schools Committee



Jeffrey Gardner
Co-Chair
Arts, Culture, Education
& Schools Committee