



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**JOHN WEIS**  
Chair

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District Manager

**Testimony to Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting, and Maritime Use  
Pre-considered L.U. No. 20125005 SCM, West 43<sup>rd</sup> Street High School**

**By Corey Johnson, Chair**

**July 25, 2011**

Good Morning Mr. Chairman. My name is Corey Johnson. I am the chair for Manhattan Community Board 4 and I am here to comment on the relocation of a Beacon High School, which is currently situated at an existing leased building at 227-243 West 61<sup>st</sup> Street, into Community District 4.

Our community is pleased to welcome a well respected public high school to our neighborhood but there are few concerns that should be taken in consideration:

***Establish a Community Advisory Task Force***

West 43<sup>rd</sup> Street is a dense residential street, with a number of high-rise residences located west of Ninth Avenue including Manhattan Plaza with more than 1,600 units and Riverbank West with 418 units. One block north of the proposed site on West 44<sup>th</sup> Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues, construction is to commence in the next year at PS 51; this project includes constructing a new elementary school and building 1,210 residential units. The community adjacent to the proposed Beacon High School site will be heavily impacted with ongoing construction in the next few years as well as a continued population increase.

The successful development and relocation of Beacon High School will require close coordination with the SCA, DOE, local elected officials, CB4 members, West 43<sup>rd</sup> and West 44<sup>th</sup> Street Block Associations, Manhattan Plaza Tenants Association, Beacon High School, and PS 51 administrators. CB4 proposes that an advisory board comprised of all stakeholders be established to resolve neighborhood issues that either may arise from construction of the new facility or increased students in the area. In particular, the principals of both PS 51 and Beacon High School will need to maintain an open dialogue with each other and the community to ensure that the safety and personal welfare of the broad range of students is met without negatively impacting the quality of life of the neighborhood.

***Public Transportation Access***

The proposed site is almost a half-mile from the nearest subway line (A, C, E) at West 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and Eighth Avenue. Given an estimated 1,400 additional students to this area every day, CB4 urges the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to reconsider implementing the proposed 7 line extension stop at Tenth Avenue and 41<sup>st</sup> Street.

### ***Lack of an Intermediate School in Clinton/Hell's Kitchen***

While CB4 supports Beacon High School's outstanding academic programs and nurturing college preparatory environment and understand its need for a larger space, we are disheartened that DOE did not also consider placing an intermediate school at the proposed location. Currently, Clinton/Hell's Kitchen does not have a stand-alone intermediate school. PS 111 is the only school in the community to offer grades 6-8.

By 2019, the Clinton/Hell's Kitchen neighborhood could add additional 26 high-rise residential buildings, with more than 11,250 units. Using a conservative estimate, this could mean more than 1,200 additional elementary school children in the neighborhood in the next ten years. These elementary school children will not attend middle school in their community because there is no middle school to accommodate them, as there has not been to accommodate the thousands of children before them. CB4 would like DOE to strongly consider constructing a stand-alone middle school in Clinton/Hell's Kitchen so that children who live in our community can also attend school here.

### ***Design of Proposed Facility***

SCA has indicated the exterior of the building will remain largely unchanged from the current design. Even so, CB4 would like to be kept informed of all design decisions as they are made and encourages SCA and DOE to attend our Quality of Life meetings when updates are available. In addition, CB4 would like SCA to explore the possibility of providing a green space on the roof of the existing site. Open space is very limited in CB4.

### ***Public Use of School Facilities***

Indoor school facilities, such as the proposed gymnasium, must be available to the local community and arts organizations for use during out-of-session hours. CB4 is home to a large number of not-for-profit theaters and arts and cultural organizations that have been impacted by escalating rents and severe space needs; the community must best use its available public resources to support cultural activities.

Thank you.