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SCHOOL LEADERS: “CO-LOCATION OPENS DOORS FOR COLLABORATION”

District and Charter Principals who Share Facilities Speak of Positive Experiences, Disproving Claim that Co-location is to Blame for Flaws in Public Education

(October 2, 2013, New York, NY) – As the City Council holds a hearing this afternoon on [three resolutions](#) aimed to cap and slow the co-location of public schools, district and charter school leaders who share facilities are speaking up about their experience co-locating with other public schools; collaboration, community building and putting kids first are recurring themes among all of them, demonstrating that educators know to check politics at the door.

Jaclyn Leffel, Director of [NYC Collaborates](#), will be testifying at today’s hearing. NYC Collaborates provides a platform for district and charter schools to share best practices; the NYC Collaborates’ Collaboration Council is comprised of 20 members dedicated to dispelling myths and working together to improve public education for all students in NYC.

“The Collaboration Council includes representation from large district schools, small high schools, charter schools, specialized schools, charter management organizations, and networks. Members understand that sharing a building is a ‘fact of life’ when educating students in the largest district in the country. Being co-located does not have to be viewed in a negative way. Many of our Council members and principals citywide have used co-location to their advantage. They have chosen to work together and learn from one another, rather than tear each other down,” said Leffel.

Testimonials from School Leaders/Collaboration Council Members:

“As Principal of P.S. 55 in the Bronx, I have been working with the Montefiore Medical Center’s School Health Program and Healthfirst Program for over 15 years in order to bring a health clinic to my school and community. It is important to me



to transform and promote a healthy lifestyle; not only for the students of P.S. 55 but for all of the students in my building regardless of what school they attend. With the help of the matching facility funding I received when Success Academy Bronx II moved into my building, I was able to complete our new health clinic and am excited to offer its services to all of our students, including Success's.

While other schools are closing their doors to charters, I recognized the potential for collaboration and shared learning. We know that Success Academy's door is always open to us and the same holds true for our school. I'm looking forward to a year full of sharing best practices and resources to the benefit of all of our students. Our teachers have already begun to observe Success Academy's classrooms and are excited about what they have seen."

*-Luis Torres, Principal, P.S. 055 Benjamin Franklin
Co-located with Success Academy Bronx II*

"As Principal of Explore Exceed, I have seen firsthand how co-location can benefit all of the schools sharing a facility. In our building at 443 St. Marks Ave. in Crown Heights, we share space with two district schools. We regularly host each other for instructional walk-throughs to see how each approaches similar curriculum challenges. Our schools have co-sponsored building-wide events, including a Food Drive to create a sense of community among students and staff, and we've even begun sharing costs to make 'home improvements' like buying a new flag and two-way radios for our building's nurses. Working together just seemed like the obvious thing to do. Being co-located has allowed us to create an environment where students and adults can learn from each other."

*-Curtis Palmore, Principal, Explore Exceed Charter School
Co-located with Brooklyn Arts and Science Elementary School (K705) and P.S. 022*

"As a New Visions charter school on the John F. Kennedy Campus in the Bronx, I have seen how co-location can work for the benefit of all schools in the building. My school is one of eight schools on the campus – two charter and six district schools. I am tremendously proud of the work the eight principals have done to collaboratively create solutions for our students.

Last year, we worked together and agreed to pool our RESO-A funding to renovate the school library and create a media center. This year we are working out the details to hire a campus librarian who will work for all the schools on the campus. We have also all joined together to fund the PSAL sports programs that both the charter and district school students participate in. Furthermore, we have jointly planned events such as a campus-wide open house and student recruitment fair for the families in District 10. On this evening it was gratifying to watch prospective students tour all the schools to find the best fit for their child rather than thinking about which schools were charter and which schools were district.



I believe that the larger conversation should not be about district versus charter schools – the conversation should be about creating great schools that best support the needs of the students they serve. It is amazing to work on a campus with leaders who believe this to be true and are collaboratively working together to support the greater efforts of providing stellar educational experiences for the students of New York City.”

*-Julia Chen, Principal, New Visions Charter High School for Advanced Math and Science
Co-located with:*

- *The New Visions Charter High School for the Humanities*
- *Bronx Engineering & Tech Academy*
- *Ellis Preparatory Academy*
- *Marble Hill International High School*
- *Bronx School of Law & Finance*
- *John F. Kennedy High School*
- *Bronx Theater High School*

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About NYC Collaborates

NYC Collaborates creates opportunities for educators from all types of public schools to come together to share information and collaborate to improve student achievement. Our members believe that public schools—whether district or charter—have a collective and mutual obligation to ensure that all students in the City graduate from high school prepared to succeed in college, work and life.

Spearheaded by the New York City Charter School Center and New York City’s Department of Education, NYC Collaborates is funded in part by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. To learn more visit: <http://www.nyccollaborates.org>.