

**Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) Resolution calling on the
Department of Education to implement a moratorium on school
closure, phase-out and school co-location proposals**

WHEREAS, the Panel for Educational Policy in accordance with its statutory obligation to advise the Chancellor on matters of educational policy and student welfare;

WHEREAS, NYC DOE has issued Proposals for Significant Changes in School Utilization and Educational Impact Statements (EIS) for our schools that will, upon PEP approval on March 11, 2013 and March 20, 2013 dissolve schools, some with a proud history of achievements and neighborhood connections;

WHEREAS, while the closing of a school may be necessary as a last resort, school closure has increasingly and improperly become the first and only policy employed by the DOE to address schools with large numbers of students with significant educational needs;

WHEREAS, in hearings and meetings held subsequently, it has become clear that the Mayor's school improvement strategy may de-stabilize thousands of students in primarily large, comprehensive high schools, and — the replacement of teachers and principals according to rigid and fundamentally arbitrary criteria without offering ample professional development opportunities — penalize the very people who have made significant improvements in several schools;

WHEREAS, the policy of school closures affects disproportionately students of color and communities affected by these policies in NYC have filed a Federal Title VI Civil Rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, citing the closing of schools and the criteria and methods for administering those actions as discriminatory toward low-income, minority communities ;

WHEREAS, charter schools were originally intended as pedagogical laboratories for innovation in teaching to better meet the needs of all our students, but particularly those at-risk, and to improve public schools by collaborating with public schools and sharing best practices with public schools;

WHEREAS, many charter schools in the City today are not pedagogical laboratories for educational innovation, do not serve students at-risk, and neither collaborates nor share best practices with public schools;

WHEREAS, some charter schools have discharged struggling students to improve school-wide test scores; and

WHEREAS, some charter schools have impaired parent participation by blocking the formation of parent-teacher or parent associations;

WHEREAS, resources available to students in NYC public schools should be used to address the educational needs of public school students, rather than supplement the budgets of the large charter management chains which have accumulated substantial assets through both public funds and their unrestricted ability to accept private funding;

WHEREAS, public school communities seeking to expand successful schools are routinely denied that opportunity by the DOE due to a purported lack of space for such expansion;

WHEREAS, opposition to charter school co-locations is increasingly widespread amongst parents, teachers, elected officials, community leaders and members of the clergy as evidenced by demonstrations, petitions, public comment at hearings and litigation to block co-locations.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Panel for Educational Policy supports a moratorium on all school closures, phase-outs and charter school co-locations and calls upon Chancellor Walcott to:

- 1) Withdraw all current proposals up for Panel vote in March 2013 for Significant Changes in School Utilization.
- 2) Impose a moratorium on all school proposals until public presentations are made in every borough reflecting on how this method will raise student achievement in lieu of existing models.
- 3) Conduct school-by-school transparent reviews of our current school improvement strategies to assess which measures and programs have been effective or are showing promise in raising student achievement, while improving the school environment; these transparent reviews should include all stakeholders.
- 4) Examine school intervention plans that maybe in place, bearing in mind those improvement strategies contemplate multiyear plans and that none of the schools may have exceeded the time allowed under the federal guidelines.
- 5) Ensure that all struggling schools, whether or not they are undergoing federally specified reform plans, are given adequate support so that the students will not only graduate but receive the quality of education that will make them college- or career- ready.
- 6) Provide a full accounting as well facilitate independent research of the educational outcomes of students remaining in previously phased out schools.
- 7) Fully cooperate with any investigation of Title VI civil rights complaints as filed with US DOE Office of Civil Rights.