



THE COUNCIL  
OF

THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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## MEMORANDUM

To: Chancellor David C. Banks  
From: Gale Brewer, City Council  
Re: West Side High School  
Date: April 27, 2023

I write to formally request a one year deferral of the proposed re-siting of Edward A. Reynolds West Side High School to allow time for increasing the enrollment. There is great demand for the services and supports offered at West Side High School, as I experienced firsthand this week.

On Monday, I co-chaired a City Council oversight hearing on the barriers to justice and the lack of support services in New York City's family courts. Sandeep Kandhari, the Director of Litigation for Center for Family Representation's Youth Defense Practice, testified that he and his colleagues struggle to connect young people to appropriate school settings and supports.

Mr. Kandhari's city services wish list, so to speak, includes an educational advisor stationed at each Family Court, akin to a DOE welcome center, to connect young people to an appropriate school setting and supportive services." I told Mr. Kandhari (on the record) that such schools exist, including West Side High School. Yesterday—two days after the hearing—Mr. Kandhari emailed my office asking for help enrolling two clients at West Side.

There are many strategies to increase enrollment at West Side High School:

- The current principal, Marangelitza Rivera, now has an open house at the school on Tuesdays and has enrolled 35 new students over the last month.
- Advocates, social workers, attorneys, and other service providers need to know about the school. Currently there is no coordination. City agencies have initiatives with young people that would be perfect for West Side, including ACS' Collaborative Assessment, Response, Engagement & Support (CARES) program.
- A volunteer group, Friends of West Side High School, is ready to do a massive recruitment campaign for students.
- Goddard Riverside's Learning to Work program at West Side High School is also developing a recruitment campaign.
- The children who missed significant class time during the pandemic and have fallen behind academically as a result will need alternative high school experiences. Middle school families should know about West Side High School.

- There are approximately 60,000 unaccounted for students who left New York public schools during the pandemic but are not registered as home-schoolers nor have they moved. Additionally, some 30% of students have been chronically absent so far this school year. The district offices currently engaged in “canvassing campaigns” should share information about West Side specifically.
- With the addition of multilingual educators, West Side High School would be an ideal environment for asylum seeker and migrant families living in HERRCs and emergency shelters.