

EXHIBIT 9

The stability and support that West Side provides are essential to the success of these students, both inside and outside of the classroom.

6. On March 3, 2023, the New York City Department of Education (“NYCDOE”) released an Educational Impact Statement (“EIS”) proposing to re-site West Side High School from Building M506, located at 140 West 102nd Street, to Building M895, located at 105 East 106th Street, beginning in the 2023-2024 school year.

7. There are many reasons that the EIS from the NYCDOE is inadequate and should be rejected. The EIS fails to address that the proposed location eliminates the stability that West Side students need, and it fails students with disabilities and individual educational programs (“IEPs”), like my son.

Failure of Stability

8. Over its fifty-year history, West Side has become part of the fabric of its neighborhood. In that time, it has been recognized for its stellar health and wellness practices, helped rename a local street, and even hosted visits from former First Lady Michelle Obama and former President Bill Clinton.

9. There was no discussion in the EIS of West Side’s ties to the surrounding community. The importance of fifty years of history in the community is that it provides stability and familiarity. West Side knows how to lead students to success at M506, in Manhattan Valley, not at M895, in East Harlem.

10. West Side’s mission is to assist students who have been unsuccessful in traditional high school settings. Many of these students, like my son, suffer from disabilities. For these students, establishing a routine is critical. The disruption of an established routine threatens to destroy the stability and familiarity that students rely on.

11. Prior to attending West Side, my son refused to attend school, and was held back a grade as a result. During his time at West Side, he has attended most of his classes, is doing his work, and likes his teachers.

12. Currently, my son takes the One train just four stops to reach West Side. The proposed location would mean that my son must take multiple trains, or a train and a bus, to get to school. In addition to disrupting the routine that has finally worked for him, the longer commute will require him to wake up earlier and get home later, further adding to his stress and adding to the disincentives to complete high school.

13. The EIS barely mentions commute times. It says that some students will have to travel further, but others may have a shorter commute. This is true of any location and provides no helpful information.

14. The EIS also describes the distance of the new building from the old building using miles, a measurement that is mostly irrelevant for people living in New York City. Currently, West Side is located near the One, B, and C trains. The proposed location is only near the Six train. Because there are different and fewer accessible train options, more students are likely to experience longer commutes. That is the measurement that matters, not a difference in mileage.

15. It has been, and in some ways continues to be, a struggle for my son to thrive at school. This proposal would throw him and others off course, just when they have finally found solid ground to stand on.

16. Students would need to become accustomed to a new neighborhood, a new commute, new facilities, and possibly fewer resources. The proposal would be doing a huge disservice to the hundreds of students who attend West Side. These students chose to attend West

Side specifically because they have struggled in previous school settings, and disrupting something that works for them and their families, would be both cruel and ineffective.

Failure for Students with IEPs

17. Students with IEPs receive special education programs and services as recommended on their IEPs. These services can include integrated co-teaching, special classes, and other support services. My son receives extra time in class, breaks, and sometimes individualized one-on-one teaching.

18. One-on-one teaching is crucial for my son. Because of his ADHD, he has trouble focusing in larger class settings. The individual attention he has received at West Side has been key to his academic improvement.

19. The EIS does not get into any specifics regarding IEPs. The EIS merely says that IEP programs and services will continue. The EIS assumes that because West Side has fewer students than the Young Women's Leadership School ("TYWLS"), the current occupants of part of Building M895, the new space will be enough. But TYWLS does not have the same amount of students with IEPs as West Side, and M895 does not have adequate space to support the number of West Side students with IEPs.

20. The class sizes at West Side are purposefully smaller, and more students at West Side require individualized, focused attention. The EIS does not address these specifics at all; it just uses boilerplate information that could apply to any school moving to any location.

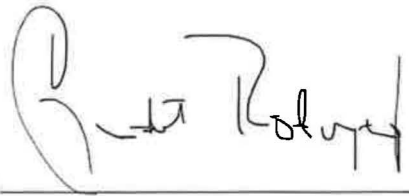
21. The EIS does not contain sufficient information or analysis to allow me or any other parent of a student with an IEP to understand the actual impact of the proposal on our children, their education, and their school.

22. The EIS mentions increasing enrollment at West Side High School as a goal of the re-siting. It repeatedly mentions the new dual-language program as a draw to the new neighborhood. But what drew me and my son to West Side High School was its reputation for consistency, and the way that they have helped him with individualized care through his IEP.

23. The EIS does not provide enough information about what will happen to students with IEPs, and it shows a clear lack of emphasis on the importance of stability to these students. The goal of increased enrollment is prioritized at the expense of providing the best experience possible for students.

24. I do not believe the NYCDOE's proposal has the best interests of the students at heart. More importantly, the EIS does not explain or give me sufficient information that I need to properly understand how the relocation would affect my son, our school, and our community.

For the above reasons, I submit this affidavit in support of the Verified Petition and in opposition to the proposed re-siting of West Side.

By: 
Grisslet Rodriguez

Sworn to before me this 12th day of June, 2023.

LAURA DAWN BARBIERI
NOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF NEW YORK
Registration No. 02BA6394203
Qualified in New York County
Commission Expires July 1, 2023

Notary Public

