



# THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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June 19, 2007

Principal Robert Finley and Brooklyn High School of the Arts Community Members  
Principal Lisa Gioe-Cordi, Assistant Principal Sharon Mahabir, and Math and Science Exploratory School Community Members  
345 Dean Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11217

Dear Principals, Parents, Staff, and Community Members

Last month I attended a joint PTA session of the Brooklyn High School of the Arts and the Math and Science Exploratory School to discuss the temporary placement of the Khalil Gibran International Academy in the Sarah J Hale building. Since then, the School Construction Authority has evaluated the space in the building to determine the feasibility of several different possible locations for the Khalil Gibran International Academy as well as additional construction requests. We have had many conversations with the school principals and concerned parents in an effort to ensure that the concerns of the many stakeholders are addressed and that our decisions are fair, clear and transparent.

2007-08

I am writing to update both school communities on some of the conclusions that we have come to for the 2007-08 school year:

- The Khalil Gibran International Academy will reside on the first floor of the Sarah J Hale building for the 2007-08 school year (in the space of the former library, Rooms 161 Annex and 165 Annex). This will require creating temporary walls and providing other equipment to make suitable instructional spaces.
- The Department of Education will create a dance studio in Room B-27 for the Brooklyn High School of the Arts students, which will include mirrors, ballet bars, and appropriate flooring. This will be completed by September 2007 and will enable MS447 to use the 4<sup>th</sup> floor gym, as well as the office space currently used by the Brooklyn High School of the Arts dance director – Room 439.
- The MS 447 technology lab will be upgraded and reconfigured by November 2007. This work will include reconfiguring the layout of the lab and outfitting it with all new equipment.
- The 48 laptop computers which had been previously stolen from MS 447 will be replaced by September 2007, although it is not DOE policy to centrally fund replacement of stolen computers unless they are covered by an insurance policy.
- We will create additional storage and shelving space on the 3rd floor, Room 309, for the MS 447 school by September 2007.

- We will evaluate the air conditioning needs of the building and determine what, if any, additional air conditioners are needed.

The location of the Khalil Gibran International Academy on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor for the 2007-08 school year will not impact any classrooms or office spaces currently used by the other two schools. Currently that space is used as a part-time cafeteria, although that use is not permitted by the Certificate of Occupancy. The current cafeteria, which was designed to hold up to 500 students per period, will be used for all cafeteria needs and upon moving the current cafeteria furniture on the first floor will have the necessary furniture and staff to meet these needs. The building principals, as part of their Building Council, will jointly decide on the programming of the cafeteria for all three schools.

This Building Council will be responsible for making all of the decisions regarding shared space in the building (including the gyms, outdoor space, entrances and exists, etc.). A member of my staff, Geri Taylor-Brown, who has many years of experience coaching principals on the important decisions around scheduling, programming, and effective use of space, will help the Building Council make these decisions. She will not be there to dictate central DOE decisions, but rather she will facilitate the conversations and decisions that will lead to the success of all three schools in the building. She also can help the building principals make connections to organizations and programs that can partner with the schools to create improved courtyard and recreation spaces. Also, now that we have a location determined for the Khalil Gibran International Academy, staff from the Office of School Intervention and Development (OSID) will work with all three building principals to craft safety and security protocols for the building and a School Safety Plan for the campus. Parts of this plan will have to be kept confidential for the safety of the students in the building. In addition, OSID will work with NYPD School Safety Division to assess campus deployment needs for 2007-2008 and to facilitate connections with the NYPD.

I understand that prior to discussions about the co-location of the Khalil Gibran International Academy in the Sarah J Hale building there had been a disagreement about which school had access to rooms 437A, 439, 440, 441, and 442 on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. We generally prefer the building principals to come to agreement between themselves about the use of space in the building. After further discussions, Principals Finley and Gioe-Cordi have agreed that beginning in the 2007-08 school year, MS 447 will have full use of rooms 437A, 439, 440, 441 and 442, including the additional lockers in those rooms. Additionally, after the Khalil Gibran International Academy vacates the space on the first floor, the Brooklyn High School of the Arts will retain the use of that space.

#### *Beyond 2008*

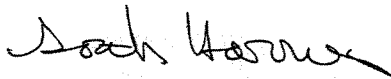
In consideration of many of the questions and concerns that we have heard from the school communities, we continue to work toward decisions in other areas for beyond the 2007-08 school year,

- In order for the Khalil Gibran International Academy to grow into its 2<sup>nd</sup> year in the Sarah J Hale Building, there will need to be some construction to either the 1<sup>st</sup> floor or areas on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to create suitable instructional space and not interfere with current Brooklyn High School of the Arts or MS 447 programs. The Department of Education and the School Construction Authority is conducting a feasibility study of those spaces. This study will not be complete until the early fall. After review of the study, if we are unable to complete the necessary construction to ensure suitable instructional space for the Khalil Gibran International Academy without harming the current schools' programs, we will relocate the Khalil Gibran International Academy after the 2007-08 school year. In any event, the Khalil Gibran International Academy will not be located in the Sarah J. Hale building beyond the 2008-09 school year.

- We have reviewed the possibility of converting the 1<sup>st</sup> floor former library space into a cafeteria after the Khalil Gibran International Academy vacates that space. However, given the capacity of the current cafeteria which was designed to serve more than the current number of students in the building, we have determined that it would be fiscally irresponsible to make the capital investment to create an additional cafeteria.
- After the Khalil Gibran International Academy moves out of the Hale building, we do not intend to co-locate an additional school in the building as long as the combined enrollment of Brooklyn High School of the Arts and MS 447 remains stable or increases and that the academic programs are adequately aligned with the available space in the building. .
- After the Khalil Gibran International Academy moves out of the Hale building, the current division of space (MS 447 uses the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors of both buildings and Brooklyn High School of the Arts uses the remainder of the buildings, with both schools using shared space, such as the cafeteria) will continue as long as enrollment is consistent with current projections. However, if both principals agree to a different use of space that better meets the needs of both schools, they are welcome to change the agreement.

Please feel free to contact me or my colleague, Jemina Bernard at (212) 374-6737, if you have any questions or concerns.

Best Regards,



Garth Harries  
Chief Portfolio Officer  
Office of Portfolio Development

Cc: Chancellor Joel Klein