

**DOWNTOWN INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS
RESOLUTION**

IN SUPPORT OF DOWNTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOL SEATS

Whereas:

1. New York City has the opportunity to increase public school capacity downtown for the Bleecker School and Millennium High School, as well as prevent the loss of school seats for PS 150;
2. For the Bleecker School, before December 31, 2018, our elected officials and New York University (NYU) must act to reinstate the School Election Notice back to 2025, the date NYU initially proposed; otherwise, the Department of Education will lose its option to build a 100,000 square foot school on the Bleecker School site and \$65+ million¹ of value will transfer from NYC taxpayers to NYU;
3. For Millennium High School, the Department of Education and School Construction Authority have the opportunity to lease the 14th Floor, immediately above MHS, which will relieve severe overcrowding and reduce safety concerns; and
4. For PS 150, because the SCA has been unable to negotiate a lease extension for PS 150's school space in Tribeca, the DOE will co-locate PS 150 at the Peck Slip School in the Seaport beginning in Fall 2019, then move the school again, to Trinity Place in the Financial District, when construction is complete, requiring PS 150 to move twice and result in a net reduction in school seats downtown.

Therefore be it resolved that:

1. For the Bleecker School:
 - a. Downtown Independent Democrats urge our elected officials and New York University to restore NYU's commitment to our community by reinstating the School Election Notice to 2025, the date NYU originally promised in its 2012 rezoning;
 - b. Failure to extend the option to 2025 will transfer \$65+ million of value from NYC taxpayers to NYU;
 - c. DID urges our elected officials and NYU to ensure that there is more than two years between the required funding and construction dates, given the complexities of the Bleecker School site; and,
2. For Millennium High School, DID requests that the DOE/SCA lease the 14th floor for Millennium High School to reduce the current 133% overcrowding and safety concerns; immediately begin build out, in consult with the school administration, and dedicate at least one, but preferably two additional elevators to the school; and,
3. For PS 150, DID urges our elected officials, the DOE and the SCA to find a mutually beneficial solution for the students and families of PS 150.

¹In a real estate market where the price per buildable square foot in Manhattan averages more than \$650, this option is worth in excess of \$65 million¹; and, arguably higher due to the lack of vacant land in Greenwich Village, either city-owned or city-optioned. See *"The Performance of the Manhattan Land Market in 2016"* Commercial Observer, Jan 25, 2017, <https://commercialobserver.com/2017/01/the-performance-of-the-manhattan-land-market-in-2016/>

BLEECKER SCHOOL FAQ

Action Needed by December 31, 2018 to Restore New York University's Commitment to our Community and Reinstate the Bleecker School Option to 2025 -- An Option Worth \$65+ Million to NYC Taxpayers

1. **Bleecker School Option:** As part of the NYU rezoning, the NYC Department of Education has the option to build a 100,000 square foot school on the Bleecker School site and \$65+ million² will transfer from NYC taxpayers to NYU.
2. **December 31, 2018 Expiration:** Without action by our elected officials and New York University, the Bleecker School Option will expire by December 31, 2018.
3. **Option Worth \$65 + Million:** If the option expires or is not exercised, 65+ million will transfer from NYC taxpayers to NYU, based on a real estate market where the price per buildable square foot in Manhattan averages more than \$650, and arguably higher due to the lack of vacant land in Greenwich Village, either city-owned or city-optioned.
4. **NYU's Shrinking Commitment to a Public School:** NYU has made a series of shrinking commitments to build a public school over the last 50 years:
 - a. In the 1960s, NYU promised to build an elementary school for neighborhood children on the site of the former Coles Sports Center and the future 181 Mercer building;
 - b. In 2010, NYU promised to build the core and shell of a new 600-seat public elementary school on one of its three superblocks; and,
 - c. In 2012, NYU promised the land for the School Construction Authority (SCA) to build a 100,000 square foot school in the Bleecker Building ("Bleecker School"), with the option expiring in 2025;
5. **Public School Would Benefit NYU:** Despite the shrinking commitment, a public school on NYU's core campus would be attractive to its faculty, staff and their families and provide lab opportunities to NYU Steinhardt;
6. **Bleecker School Key Community Benefit in 2012 NYU Rezoning:** As part its 2012 rezoning, NYU made a good faith promise to our community for the Bleecker School, committing to a 100,000 square foot public school and a 2025 option date:
 - a. As part of the NYC Charter mandated Uniform Land Use Review Process, Community Board 2, the Manhattan Borough President and the NYC Department of City Planning all reviewed a rezoning package that included NYU's commitment for a 100,000 square foot public school and a 2025 option date; and,
 - b. However, the final rezoning approved by the NYC City Council included an option, or School Election Notice that would expire *11 years earlier* on December 31, 2014 and required that school construction begin no more than four years after school funding, as detailed in the final Restrictive Declaration of Large-Scale Development for the NYU LSGD ("Restrictive Declaration");
7. **Ongoing Efforts to Reinstate the 2025 Option Date:** Since the 2012 rezoning, community leaders, Manhattan Community Board 2 (CB 2) and Community Education Council District 2 (CECD2) have been working to reinstate the School Election Notice to 2025, the date that NYU originally proposed:
 - a. In October 2014, both CB 2 and Community Education Council District 2 (CECD2) unanimously passed resolutions in support of reinstating the School

² "The Performance of the Manhattan Land Market in 2016" Commercial Observer, January 25, 2017. <https://commercialobserver.com/2017/01/the-performance-of-the-manhattan-land-market-in-2016/>

Election Notice to the 2025; but, in a letter dated October 21, 2014, NYU only extended the School Election Notice four years to December 31, 2018 and shortened the allotted time between school funding and school construction to 19 months from 3.5 years;

- b. In June 2017, CB 2's demographic analysis demonstrated the need for the Bleecker School based on projected and current demand for public school seats, including the following drivers of demand:
 - i. Current elementary schools remain over capacity and overcrowded;
 - ii. Continued development, rezoning and future zoning changes;
 - iii. Unmet programmatic needs, such as dual-language programs, language-based learning programs and inadequate space for physical education, arts, science and other non- math/ELA academic subjects;
 - iv. Need to modernize 19th century school facilities throughout District 2 to meet 21st century education needs and comply with ADA standards for accessible design;
 - v. Expansion of Pre-K and 3K programs;
 - vi. Inclusion of District 75 seats;
 - vii. CEQR flaws and growth of family-sized apartments; and,
 - viii. Reduction in class size to comply with Contract for Excellence laws;
 - c. In 2017, both CB 2 and CECD2 unanimously passed resolutions in support of reinstating the School Election Notice to the 2025; and,
 - d. In 2018, CB 2 unanimously passed a resolution in support of restoring NYU's commitment and reinstating the School Election Notice to 2025;
8. **SCA Needs More Time between Funding and Construction:** In 2018, the SCA stated that it will need more than two years between school funding and school construction due to the complexities of the Bleecker School site – not only is the site NYU-owned and controlled, it also will require demolition and construction of 32,000 square feet of below-grade space for NYU, allowances for construction staging and coordination with the 181 Mercer build-out and other parties on the superblock;
9. **Why 2025:** Not only was 2025 promised, it is needed because:
- a. The Bleecker School remains unfunded in the FY 2015 – FY 2019 capital plan;
 - b. New school planning takes time – 75 Morton took 12 years from advocacy to opening and NYU's own 181 Mercer Building remains under construction;
 - c. Downtown schools at Trinity Place and Duarte Square are delayed; and,
 - d. The additional time allows more time to consider educational needs in a dynamically changing residential environment;
10. **Future Options for Bleecker School Site:**
- a. Moving an existing District 2 middle school to a new location and expanding a co-located elementary school, such as when PS 3 expanded after Greenwich Village Middle School moved downtown as Lower Manhattan Community School or PS 11 expanded after The Clinton School moved and also expanded; and,
 - b. Opening a new elementary or middle school, including a zoned school, a NYU lab school or a District 2-wide school based on diversity, dual-language, learning disability or other admission criteria.

MILLENNIUM HIGH SCHOOL FAQ

Action needed to Lease the 14th Floor to Expand Millennium High School, Relieve Overcrowding and Improve Safety

1. **About Millennium:** Millennium opened in 2002 after 9/11 on the 11th through 13th floors of 75 Broad Street in Lower Manhattan and has since developed into one of the most sought-after high schools in the City, one with remarkable racial and economic diversity, drawing over 6,000 applications for an average of 175 spots, depending on the number of sections admitted;
2. **Priority Admissions Below Houston:** Millennium gives admissions priority for students attending middle school or living below Houston Street;
3. **Previous Expansion Denied:** In 2011, Millennium requested to expand into 26 Broadway and was denied in favor of placing the overcrowded upper east side school, Richard Greene High School in the space instead, against the wishes of downtown families and students;
4. **Millennium is Severely Overcrowded:** The school has capacity for 525 students, but it presently has over 700 students and the 2018- 2019 freshman class has over 210 students, causing class sizes to be at 35-37, putting them out of compliance with UFT class size limit of 34;
5. **Overcrowding Creates Safety and Financial Concerns:**
 - a. It takes 30 minutes for students to arrive and dismiss, given that only 10 students can fit in an elevator at a time, and only three elevators presently serve the school, making fire drill staging dangerous, and
 - b. As Millennium has grown more popular, there has been a rise in the general education offer vs. acceptance rate rising from 44% in 2016, to 46% in 2017 and 55% in 2018, making it difficult to gauge the amount of offers to make.
6. **14th Floor Available to Lease:** The 14th Floor has recently become available for lease, giving the City the important opportunity to relieve Millennium's severe overcrowding and improve serious safety concerns.

PS 150 FAQ

Action Needed to Find a Mutually Beneficial Solution for the Students and Families of PS 150

- 1. About PS 150:** PS 150 currently serves 186 PK-5 students, with priority admissions to students zoned for PS 234 and PS 276, then for students zoned for other elementary schools in Community Board 1, then for students throughout District 2, but the majority of PS 150 students live downtown.
- 2. Blue Ribbon School.** The U.S. Department of Education Designated PS 150 a Blue Ribbon School in 2014.
- 3. Expired Lease.** The City's lease for school space at Independence Plaza in TriBeCa expired last summer and the complex's owners, Vornado Realty Trust and Stellar Management, agreed to a only a one-year extension.
- 4. DOE's Current Plan for PS 150 Requires Two Moves.** The DOE plans to temporarily relocate PS 150 to PS 343, the Peck Slip School in the Seaport for the 2019-20 school year, then move PS 150 to 28-42 Trinity Place in the Financial District when construction of the new school building is complete in approximately four years.
- 5. Peck Slip and Trinity Place Schools Were Built to Relieve Overcrowding** not to offset the loss by closing an existing public elementary school.
- 6. Real Estate Interests Trumping Community Interests.** The potential loss of PS 150 is emblematic of real estate interests that lead to vacant storefronts, loss of small businesses and community institutions that erode the character of our neighborhoods.