



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Senator Addabbo Statement on John Adams Hs

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR April 23, 2012

-- In September of 2011, John Adams High School was one of a number of schools throughout the City of New York that was tapped to undergo a “transformation” – to take steps over three years to improve its operations, raise test scores, increase graduation rates, and ultimately provide our local children with the best possible education.

-- Only a few months later, in January of this year, the carpet was pulled out from under John Adams High School. Instead of continuing on its three year path to improvement under the “transformation” model, John Adams became one of eight Queens schools slated for closure at the end of this academic year in June under a different “turnaround” plan.

-- In other words, with virtually no warning and no acknowledgement of the improvements already in place and those yet to come, John Adams is supposed to close its doors, change its name, and do away with half of its faculty.

-- As a life long resident of Ozone Park and past supporter of John Adams HS, I disagree with that approach, because it doesn’t give John Adams the chance it deserves – ***and was told it had*** – to assess its strengths and weaknesses and to go forward with improvements.

-- Since its initial designation as a “transformation” school, John Adams High School has been working hard and successfully to make improvements. Closing this school would be a slap in the face to our entire John Adams High School community – our students, families, teachers, school administrators and everyone else who cares about this historic educational institution and who wants it to succeed.

-- On its website, John Adams High School notes that it is “Celebrating 89 Years of Academic Excellence.” Clearly, sacrificing this school to a “turnaround” scheme doesn’t leave John Adams with very much to celebrate.

-- Instead of shuttering John Adams High School, why don’t we honor the original restart improvement agreement?

-- There is a tremendous amount at stake here. The academic success of our children is at stake. Job stability for talented teachers and administration is at stake. Funding to help John Adams and other schools that are struggling to improve is at stake. Any decision to close John Adams High School should not be made lightly, and in my mind, should not be made at all.

-- One week from today, only seven days from right now, the Panel for Educational Policy will vote on whether to close John Adams High School and 25 other schools throughout the City. I hope they will see the wisdom of letting this school stay open.

-- To take a few more words from John Adams himself, he once said that “children should be educated and instructed in the principles of freedom.” I think it would be a great lesson for our children, and it would be respect for President John Adams, if we were to apply the principles of freedom to this high school and give it the chance – *the freedom, if you will* – to finish the job of improvement it has already begun.