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SENATOR JOSÉ R. PERALTA
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Honorable Dennis M. Walcott
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

March 1, 2013

Dear Chancellor Walcott:

I commend you for recognizing in your plans for Newtown High School the needs of the burgeoning immigrant student population that calls Western Queens home, particularly the Corona, Jackson Heights and Elmhurst communities that I represent.

You may recall that, two years ago, I suggested the creation of a new school for immigrants that would alleviate overcrowding at Newtown, in addition to providing immigrant English-language learners the intensive language-development help they need. My proposal was meant as an immediate alternative to closure, as well as a long-term solution to the overcrowding at Newtown.

Unfortunately, the latest plan for Newtown neither creates desperately needed additional seating, nor recognizes the strides that the school has made, as reflected by the B the Department of Education awarded the school on its most recent Progress Report.

I have similar concerns about plans for my alma mater, Flushing High School. Here too we have seen progress in the face of challenging circumstances. The Department of Education's plan, however, fails to recognize these strides or help the school cope with the challenges it faces, including overcrowding and the continuous instability that the years-long threat of closure has created.

More than anything else, what the communities I represent and the entire borough of Queens need from the Department of Education is more schools, more classrooms and more seats for our children and youth.

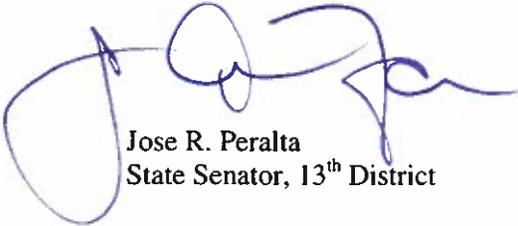
Dismantling neighborhood high schools, and co-locating within them programs that accept students from far and wide, makes the idea of families being able to send their children to a good school in their own community an increasingly nostalgic notion.

I urge you not to co-locate programs within Newtown and Flushing High Schools.

Mr. Dennis M. Walcott
Chancellor
March 1, 2013
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Thank you. I look forward to hearing from you soon about this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Jose R. Peralta
State Senator, 13th District

cc: John Ficalora
Magdalene Radovich