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ROZIC, LIU PUSH TO RESTORE FUNDING FOR EARLY COLLEGE CREDIT PROGRAM AT TOWNSEND HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL

State budget expected to include millions more to expand model citywide

FLUSHING, NY – State Senator John Liu, Chair of the Senate Committee on NYC Education, and Assembly Member Nily Rozic yesterday joined NYC Public Schools Chancellor Melissa Aviles-Ramos at Townsend Harris High School to call for the continued funding of the school's exceptional early college credit Bridge Program.

For decades, the program has given THHS students a unique opportunity to experience college life by taking real college courses at neighboring Queens College. Students not only earn college credit, but also gain firsthand experience with campus life, independence, and navigating a college environment.

Until 2020, the program was funded through a grant from NYC Public Schools, but this was discontinued when the pandemic struck. Since then, the school has struggled to keep the program afloat, combining its own budget with intermittent aid from local and state elected officials. The legislators are pushing to include additional funding in the state budget to sustain the popular program and expand the model citywide.

Senator John Liu stated, "Townsend Harris High School's Bridge Program gives students a head start on college through a unique partnership with Queens College that is simply unmatched. It's unacceptable that such an impactful program that prioritizes excellence and equity has been left to scramble for funding year after year. That's why we're pushing to restore this funding so students don't have to foot the bill, and the program can continue to thrive here in Queens, serving as a model for similar college-readiness initiatives throughout the city."

Assemblywoman Nily Rozic, an alumna of the school, stated, "Townsend Harris has long exemplified academic excellence, and its early college Bridge Program is a testament to what's possible when we invest in our students' futures. With the proposed inclusion of significant funding to expand this model across the city, we would be taking a bold step toward making higher education more accessible and equitable for all New York City students. I am grateful to Chancellor Aviles-Ramos for this visit underscoring what matters most."

Brian Condon, Principal of Townsend Harris High School stated, "The Queens College Bridge Program at Townsend Harris is the most important educational opportunity offered by our school, and we believe passionately in providing all of our students with access to it. This

program is a model for all early college programs in the city, and by restoring this funding, we know that we can both provide a first-rate experience for our students and can open our doors to the rest of the city. We want other schools to see what can be done when partnering with an esteemed institution like Queens College, and we are eager to share what we have built. Thank you to our legislators for their steadfast support since the funding was cut in 2020, and I am truly grateful to Chancellor Aviles-Ramos for taking the time to engage with our students and see the promise of this partnership.”

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