

## NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC ADVOCATE CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

### ARTS EDUCATION PUBLIC POLICY

#### ELECTION 2009

Candidate Name: **Alex T. Zablocki**  
Address: **103 Surfside Plaza**  
**Staten Island, NY 10307**  
Phone: **718-734-1093**  
Email: [alex@alex2009.com](mailto:alex@alex2009.com)  
Web address: [www.alex2009.com](http://www.alex2009.com)

#### Candidate answers:

1. As Public Advocate I would use the position to involve the private/non-profit sector more in arts education and funding. If elected I would also like to have borough art contests amongst high school students and use it to help combat graffiti, especially amongst our youth population.

We need more arts programs (as well as music and physical education programs) in our schools.

2. Schools currently don't do enough to involve students in the cultural resources our city offers. Schools need to have more ties to these institutions and partner with them, bringing them to the classroom.

As Public Advocate I am an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees at the Museum of the City of New York. In this capacity, I would like to develop a curriculum relation to New York City history for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students – especially local borough history – to get more students educated and interested in the community they live in.

3. Though this would not fall directly under the jurisdiction of a Public Advocate, I would use my investigative powers/duties to find the highest dropout rates, by school and community, and issue this report to the Mayor, City Council and Department of Education so that more resources could be allocated to these areas. Having the best data available can help us better allocate resources to prevent dropouts and improve graduation rates. In the most severe circumstances, a monetary incentive and/or job placement program might be plausible and could positively help with motivating students to stay in school and graduate.

4. YES. Arts education leads to a more, well rounded education for all students and improves the schooling experience. It also unlocks all students' creative potential.

5. YES. All schools should be complying with State regulations – if it is a funding problem, then the State and/or City should provide that funding.

6. YES. Of course! We can only make programs work better if we have the data on whether or not these programs are working to improve them and make them more accountable.

7. *(Not a yes or no question, but YES we do need more arts space)* As Public Advocate, I would like to see more art spaces inside and outside public schools. This could mean the creative use of vacant spaces throughout a building, lobbies, as well as allowing students to use spaces off school grounds and outside of a school. Classrooms (and classes) could be used/held before or after school, as well as gyms when they are not being used.

8. YES. But it should be a task force that includes members from both the public sector and private/non-profit sector.

9. YES. Both of these should be expanded in public schools already. As Public Advocate, I would partner with the private sector and the Department of Education to offer these opportunities. Charter Schools may also be another venue to achieve these goals, as long as they complement existing public schools and do not drain resources or school seats from them.

10. YES. This could be a great continuing education or certificate program offered at public schools to teachers and administrators, after school, by partnering with CUNY and the UFT.

Additional comments:

It is important that we recognize the role parents can play and do play in their child's education. With the recent legislation passed to extend the Mayor's control of our public schools, we must be mindful of the fact that education is about children and the future of New York, not politics. As a product of the New York City public school system, having attended PS 23 in Richmond Town, SI, IS 75, Huguenot, SI and Susan Wagner High School, Seaview, SI, I know firsthand what the old school system was like and I saw how our schools can often times forget the most vulnerable students. As the son of a 40-year veteran of the public school system, I must also say that teachers, now more than ever, need more control over what is taught in our classrooms and more of a say on how to better educate children – not corporate leaders. As Public Advocate, improving education will be one of my top priorities and I will have a dedicated staff to assist parents AND teachers with problems they are having with the Department of Education. I will also be a strong advocate for more arts, music and physical education programs in our schools.