



New York City Public Advocate Candidate Questionnaire Arts Education Public Policy Election 2009

The following questions are designed to determine candidates' positions on a number of issues related to the delivery of arts education in New York City public schools. Questionnaires are being delivered to all certified candidates for the Office of Public Advocate. Responses will be posted on The Center for Arts Education's website and provided to the public and press. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

The Center for Arts Education is a 501 (c)(3)nonpartisan organization that neither supports nor opposes any candidate or political party for office.

Candidate Name: Bill de Blasio

Signature of Candidate: _____

Bill de Blasio

Date: _____8/8/09_____

Candidate Questions:

1. If elected Public Advocate, what policies or initiatives, if any, would you pursue to improve access to arts education in the city?

Explain To improve access to arts education in the City, I believe we must:

- Expand our vision of public education by creating a more dynamic relationship between New York City's diverse set of resources, such as arts and cultural institutions, and its public schools. New York City public schools are situated amidst a rich, vibrant network of opportunities for engaging students in creative thought and enriching learning experiences. These should be proactively integrated into the learning process, both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Making time for arts. Many are concerned that too much time is spent on preparing and taking tests. While we need mechanisms for measuring student progress, the gathering of information has costs – not only economic costs, but also academic costs, as time spent on test preparation can result in a narrowing of school curricula to exclude areas such as art, music and other enrichment activities. We must constantly reevaluate testing, its impact on student learning, and how we can work to achieve a curriculum that is balanced and does not cut critical areas like arts, music and other creative pursuits.
- Funding the arts. We must open up the DOE budget to the public. Increased budget accountability will help us to root out wasteful and unnecessary DOE expenditures, and maximize funding for areas like arts education.

2. How can the cultural resources of New York City be leveraged to positively impact the lives of school children?

Explain It is time to re-think the relationship between New York City and its public schools. The relationship between public schools and the City as a whole should be a two-way street— this means bringing New York City’s diverse set of assets into schools, and helping schools become active participants in New York City life and culture. Schools should be forward-thinking centers of innovation that propel New York City into the future through our students and their engagement with the world. We must draw on New York City’s unparalleled resources to turn our schools into integral parts of our City’s economic, intellectual and cultural landscape, and we must create schools that will graduate students who are ready to face challenges of the future.

I will broaden the discussion about public education by working with New York City cultural institutions, industries, citizen groups, community organizations, unions, universities, parents, students and educators to convene a Commission on the Future of Education in New York City. The Commission will be charged with recommending partnerships, policy changes and other actions that will strengthen our schools, re-orient them toward the future and, most importantly, prepare students to effectively face the challenges ahead. Areas for the Commission to consider include:

- Promoting public schools as centers of innovation that generate new approaches to teaching and learning.
- Exploring new ways of providing services through partnerships and innovative uses of technology to extend and support learning beyond the school day.
- Defining the essential artistic, academic, athletic, citizenship and enrichment opportunities that should be available to all students at each school level.
- Identifying and responding to trends in future opportunities upon high school graduation.

3. What policies or initiatives do you propose to prevent drop outs and increase the city’s graduation rates?

Explain We must employ a variety of strategies to prevent drop outs and increase the City’s graduation rates. A few examples include:

- Student engagement – As stated above, we must work to ensure that the school curriculum is vibrant and diverse. We must guard against narrowing the school curriculum to maximize test preparation at the expense of areas like arts and cultural activities, which can engage students in learning and school.
- Increasing accountability for schools – The City should post daily attendance data for every public school. For students to succeed in our public school system, they must attend school regularly— period. This will allow the public to track this fundamental indicator of school performance.

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- Parent engagement – Parents provide the support needed for students to attend school each and every day and to be motivated to achieve their highest potential. As a public school parent, I know our City can do more to involve families in their children’s education. It is ultimately in the interest of our public schools to increase parent engagement. Parents who are informed, supported, and included in important conversations about education will help to empower educators, strengthen our schools, and increase accountability. I will work to increase parent engagement through variety of strategies including monthly Borough Education Forums, working with Superintendents offices to increase their presence in the community and better engage families, and increasing parent involvement through new and innovative use of internet resources, such as webcasting PTA and CEC meetings.

4. What policies or initiatives, if any, would you support to prevent the loss of arts spaces in public schools due to overcrowding or other factors?

Explain Schools should grow with the community, and not reduce space for arts and other activities due to overcrowding. We must plan proactively for the impact that residential development will have on schools. The Public Advocate appoints a member of the City Planning Commission, who can help to ensure that the land use process accurately estimates and plans for the additional school capacity that is required by development projects.

5. Do you support the reinstatement of per pupil dedicated funding for arts education in all New York City public schools?

Yes

No

Explain I have signed on as a Cosponsor to Resolution 837 in the City Council, which calls upon the DOE to maintain a minimum level of arts funding in public schools.

<p>6. Should the New York City Department of Education lead remediation efforts or other interventions for schools found to be out of compliance with state arts education requirements?</p>	<p>Yes X</p>	<p>No</p>
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Explain The DOE should be leading this effort to ensure that all New York City public schools are providing every student with the arts education curriculum that will help them to be creative thinkers and engaged students.

<p>7. Should school <i>Progress Reports</i> include reporting on a wider array of factors, such as data from the <i>Annual Arts in Schools Report</i>, compliance with state education requirements or other?</p>	<p>Yes X</p>	<p>No</p>
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Explain School Progress reports include a very limited set of information and can be confusing to parents. Including factors such as compliance with State arts education requirements and other indicators about arts in schools would help to provide parents with a more accurate and useful understanding of how schools are serving students.

<p>8. Do you support the creation of a city-wide task force to examine access to arts education offerings in public schools?</p>	<p>Yes X</p>	<p>No</p>
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Explain A task force to examine access to arts education would be a very important step in 1) assessing the arts programs that are currently offered in schools and 2) identifying which schools are particularly in-need when it comes to arts education, and 3) implementing a strategy to both support arts programming at all schools and to specifically focus on the schools that currently offer few of these opportunities to students.

<p>9. Should the city expand career and technical education offerings to include more creative and innovative learning opportunities?</p>	<p>Yes X</p>	<p>No</p>
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Explain Career and Technical Education (CTE) schools offer a substantial resource that should be more fully developed. I will work to increase students’ access to quality CTE schools that can prepare them to be part of a well-rounded, well-prepared workforce ready for employment in high a variety of careers. My office will seek to expand CTE opportunities by creating new school partnerships between the DOE and New York City’s incredibly rich set of assets and resources, including arts organizations and cultural institutions.

<p>10. Do you support more comprehensive pre-service training for principals and teachers in the area of arts education and arts integration?</p>	<p>Yes X</p>	<p>No</p>
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Explain Professional development opportunities for principals and teachers are vital to a diverse curriculum and effective teaching. Increasing these opportunities for arts education and arts integration is important, and should be done collaboratively with educators to ensure that they are partners in designing the professional development programs that will be most useful for them and, as a result, to their students.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: _____

Please return completed questionnaire by August 12, 2009 to:
The Center for Arts Education
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