

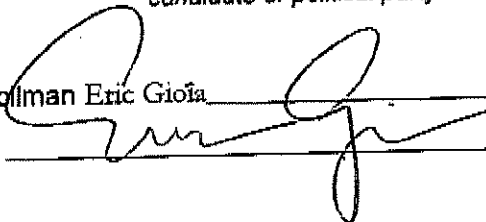


**New York City Public Advocate Candidate Questionnaire  
Arts Education Public Policy  
Election 2009**

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: Councilman Eric Gioia

Signature of Candidate:  Date: 8.2.09

**Candidate Questions:**

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

Home to the world's greatest collection of museums and cultural institutions, New York City has an abundance of cultural resources. These institutions are important tourist attractions that contribute to the fabric of the city, but we need to do more to create connections between schools and these institutions, while keeping funding for arts education robust. In the City Council, I've been proud to sponsor after-school sports leagues and college prep classes, programs that teach students chess and bring them together to play chess tournaments, and other programs that expose students to the arts and culture. As Public Advocate, I'll work to expand these initiatives.

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

COUNCILMAN ERIC GIOIA  
CANDIDATE FOR NYC PUBLIC ADVOCATE

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When the Museum of Modern Art was under construction between 2002 and 2004, I was proud that my City Council district in Long Island City was home to MoMA QNS. I saw firsthand the impact that having such an unparalleled cultural resource in close proximity had for all those living in Western Queens – indeed, I wrote about the effect in *Newsday* in July 2, 2002 (full editorial attached below). As Public Advocate, I'll continue to forge connections between institutions such as MoMA and school children through visits by artists and educators to classrooms, and by bringing school children directly to our great museums, libraries, theaters, and other resources.

## **MoMA's Hot Spot Inspires New Visions of Queens**

**July 2, 2002**

**By Eric Gioia**

Marcel Proust, the early 20th-century French writer, once said, "The real act of discovery is not in finding new lands, but in seeing with new eyes." With last week's opening of the Museum of Modern Art in Long Island City, visitors from around the world as well as lifelong New Yorkers have the opportunity to do both.

Seeing art changes the way we look at the world, and I know that having MoMA here will change the way the world looks at Queens. In less than a week, almost 25,000 people have visited MoMA QNS (pronounced Q-N-S) to see some of its 100,000 paintings, sculptures, photographs, drawings, prints and other works of art. This auspicious start bodes well for MoMA QNS, which can expect millions more visitors over the next few years.

Those who come from near and far will see a Queens in the midst of an artistic, commercial and residential renaissance. The addition of MoMA and the hundreds of thousands of visitors and tens of millions of dollars it brings to Queens this year alone will stoke this engine of rebirth.

The burgeoning economic and residential renaissance of Long Island City is the perfect complement to Queens' rich and varied cultural tapestry. MoMA QNS joins 13 other cultural institutions that call Long Island City home, including the P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, the American Museum of the Moving Image, the Isamu Noguchi Museum and Socrates Sculpture Park. It solidifies Long Island City's standing as a true cultural destination for people from around the world.

As recent experience has shown, arts and culture are leading economic indicators - just look at SoHo, TriBeCa and Williamsburg. Long Island City is next. Sitting in the geographic center of New York City, with breathtaking views of the East River skyline, Long Island City has extensive expanses of land ready for revitalization. Its close proximity to our airports, major highways and subways, the Long Island Rail Road, and Metro-North at Grand Central Terminal (just one subway stop away from Long Island City) make Long Island City a perfect location for businesses looking for space outside Manhattan, as well as for residents and visitors.

Visionary companies such as Citigroup, MetLife, and Silvercup Studios have already chosen to invest in Long Island City by moving thousands of employees to new offices there. Long Island City is also the site of the beautiful new Queens West development, which houses more than 1,000 families now and will soon be home to many more. And New York City's Olympic plans for 2012 bring Long Island City to center stage as the proposed site for the Olympic Village. Over the next 10 years, as Long Island City continues to develop, it will become a hub

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of art, business and residences.

In addition to its economic impact, MoMA QNS will expand cultural opportunities to new audiences. The museum, just a block from the No. 7 train, which is known as the "International Express," is situated in our nation's most ethnically diverse county. Immigrants come to Queens through JFK Airport, this century's Ellis Island, for the freedom to make a better life here in America for their families, just as artists have been coming to our city for decades for the unparalleled freedom of expression our country not only offers, but reveres.

The most exciting new audience for the museum is the children of Queens, many of whom are immigrants or children of immigrants. These children, whose neighborhoods are just minutes from MoMA QNS, will be exposed for the first time to masterworks by artists like Paul Cezanne, Jasper Johns and Frida Kahlo. Art education is key to intellectual and emotional development, and now critical art education in the classroom will be complemented by convenient trips to one of the greatest museums in the world. Having received my education in public schools less than a mile from where MoMA QNS stands today, I am looking forward to taking students from the schools I attended, PS 11 and IS 125, on tours of the museum and watching the way they see the world literally change before my eyes.

I was born and raised in western Queens and now represent the area in the New York City Council. My goal is to make Queens an even more compelling destination - a place where people come from all around the world to live, work, start a business and raise a family. I hope that when people come to Queens, whether for a job, to make a home or to see Vincent van Gogh's "The Starry Night," they will see with new eyes and discover a vibrant part of New York they may never have seen before.

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

Progress has been made in New York City schools, but with a dropout rate of 13.5%, and with only 56.4% of students graduating high school in four years – including 51.4% of African American and 48.7% of Latino students (versus 71.5% of Whites), and only 35.8% of English language learning students – it's clear that much more needs to be done. Without even a high school degree, young people are trapped at the edges of society, and their options are limited, particularly in difficult economic times. Over 163,000 youth ages 16-24 are neither in school nor in the workforce. These "disconnected youth" – whose numbers swell to almost 220,000 when you factor in those seeking work but still unemployed – represent a lost generation without hope of a better future.

For too long, the education debate reform has been hampered by an excessive focus on issues that don't move our schools forward. We must move beyond political posturing to focus on the issues that enable learning, increase graduation rates, and lead to better student achievement.

We know what to do to measurably improve our schools, to take steps like extending the school day, extending the school year, providing universal preschool and pre-K, and integrating schools within the city's social service networks. The problem is that many of these initiatives require dramatic changes to the school system, and a sizable financial investment. Yet these

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obstacles cannot stop discussion about the steps we should take to give our kids a better education. As Public Advocate, I'll help lead a frank conversation about priorities, and deciding what our children – and our city's future – are worth, while making sure that parents, teachers, administrators, advocates, and all stakeholders have a voice in the process. Now is the time to consider bold action to move our schools forward.

**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?**

Even in times of fiscal constraints, it is extremely important to prevent the loss of arts spaces in public schools. I believe that we need to embark upon an ambitious program to construct not just new schools but new neighborhoods, especially in under-utilized areas.

I was proud to shepherd through the first ever inclusionary zoning plan in Queens – which the *Daily News* called “A Plan to Save Queens.” We have since included inclusionary zoning in two other areas of my district. I’ve worked with the City since passing these rezonings to implement a program to allow affordable homeownership – allowing low and moderate income New Yorkers to build equity and invest in neighborhoods. Additionally, in my district we have passed a plan for the largest affordable housing development in decades, a 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Stuyvesant Town on the Queens waterfront. This development, called Hunters Point South, will create thousands of jobs and over 3,000 affordable housing units for both low-income and middle-income families.

As Public Advocate, I’ll continue to explore building on broad boulevards, along the waterfront and on top of railyard decks – areas that have gone underutilized but where smart, sensible, and sustainable development, connected to mass transportation and as a part of mixed-use communities, can have a big impact. Developing these new neighborhoods and building new schools holds the key to addressing overcrowding and preserving dedicated arts spaces.

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

Yes

No

<b>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?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
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Yes.

<b>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?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
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Yes.

I believe it's important that we increase oversight and transparency over the Department of Education, which will give parents and education advocates increased ability to have input over important education decisions. It is the job of good city government to make sure every parent feels secure in their child's public school education, and while schools have improved in recent years, too many parents in New York City drop their children off for school in the morning, worry all day about what's going on in that school, and go home wondering why they don't have more of a voice in their children's education. That needs to change. The number one thing we can do is have independent auditing of the school system and its budgets so that parents aren't solely relying on DOE statistics as they make crucial decisions about their children's education. And expanding the information included in school progress reports to include arts information would be extremely helpful as well.

These measures are critical to increasing the role that parents and advocates have in the school system, and to ensuring that their input is given the respect that they deserve.

<b>8. Do you support the creation of a city-wide task force to examine access to arts education offerings in public schools?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
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Yes.

<b>9. Should the city expand career and technical education offerings to include more creative and innovative learning opportunities?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
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Yes.

<p><b>10. Do you support more comprehensive pre-service training for principals and teachers in the area of arts education and arts integration?</b></p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<p><b>No</b></p>
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Yes.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

A good education and a chance to succeed – it's the one thing we all want for our kids. A well-rounded education provides the basis for all our successes later on in life, and it's the key to building the vibrant knowledge-based economy that will allow New York to thrive and prosper and lead the world.

I know how important education is, because without the education I received at PS 11 and JHS 125 – and without the dedication and passion of teachers like Mrs. Blumenthal and Ms. Nightingale – I wouldn't be where I am today.

I also know how lucky I was.

It's no secret that too many schools are failing too many of our kids. No one seems accountable. No one has answers. No one seems to stand up for the common-sense reforms and pragmatic fixes that will keep our kids on the path toward rewarding, enriching lives.

That's what a strong Public Advocate can do. That's what I'll do.

- **Making sure teachers are reimbursed when they buy critical classroom supplies.** A good teacher will do anything for his or her students. Their devotion is really astonishing – not just in terms of time and energy, but also, in this era of tight budgets, in terms of money, too. When my investigation uncovered how much teachers were spending out-of-pocket for even the most basic classroom supplies, I made sure they were reimbursed for the money they spent for their students.
- **Securing millions in funding to get our schools wired and connected to the Internet.** Today's jobs demand technical know-how. If our schools can't deliver it, they're leaving our kids behind. When I learned that schools in my district were going without such basics as computers and Internet access, I got them the funding they needed to prepare students to enter the 21st Century workplace.
- **Creating safe, structured extracurricular programs.** For a well-rounded education, classroom learning is only part of the equation. It's also critical that students have a safe place to go after school where they can learn teamwork and leadership – and stay out of trouble. Toward that end, I founded the first little league in Long Island City – along with soccer and basketball – and funded marching bands, chess tournaments and more so that kids have after school opportunities.

- **Making sure kids don't go through the school day hungry.** It takes everything a kid has to make it in school. Imagine trying to do it with a rumbling stomach. Well, a lot of kids didn't have to imagine; they were trying to do just that. I convinced the Schools Chancellor to start feeding kids breakfast in their classrooms. As a result, more and more kids are starting their day with a hearty, healthy meal – and the energy they need to do their best.

As Public Advocate, I'll fight to ensure that every child in New York has the opportunity to reach their potential, and I'll get results.

For more information, please visit [www.EricGioia.com](http://www.EricGioia.com).

**Please return completed questionnaire by August 12, 2009 to:**

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