

## **Proposal for District 15 Early Childhood Center**

### Goal:

To create an Early Childhood Center offering full-day pre-K and kindergarten to students within walking distance of K293. The center will alleviate the early grade overcrowding in Cobble Hill/Carroll Gardens schools, while returning students to their zoned schools for the first grade.

### Precedent:

There is presently such a site in the south end of District 15, where there is an early childhood center attached to PS 1 in Sunset Park. The center is based in a local church and the director is an assistant principal that works collaboratively with the principal at PS 1.

### Rationale:

An early childhood center will ensure that no students are denied pre-K spots and that class sizes at local schools remain reasonable. This center will be designed to serve all neighborhood students, including those with special needs and English Language Learners, for whom early identification of needs and full-day pre-K are most effective. The center will work collaboratively with existing schools in the building since the principals of the middle schools can begin to train their students to become mentors, assistants and "big sisters/brothers" to the younger children. Some of the facilities in the K293 building such as culinary arts, music and visual arts can also be utilized by the Early Childhood Center.

### Operation:

In this type of setting, parents play a very important part, so the center could institute a board of parents from the different feeder schools to work together to develop philosophy for program and maintain transparency. This school would work well under an assistant principal position. Although the classrooms would need some retrofitting to accommodate younger children, the same would be true for the proposed charter school.

### Advantages:

The current proposal for a Success Academy will generate divisions and tension in the district, based on the lack of trust and collaboration already displayed. The Success Academy is communicating that the school will serve certain populations but not others. Additionally, the charter school will have limited transparency and accountability for who they serve and who they graduate. There is nothing to suggest that they will be team players going forward. In contrast, the proposed Early Childhood Center would be community-led and community-based.

### Next Steps:

An exploratory committee can be set up to pursue this effort, consisting of parents and expert educators in the district. Carmen Farina, former District 15 principal, superintendent and DOE Deputy Chancellor, has agreed to help convene the committee.