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Resolution re 75 Morton Street

Whereas our public schools in Community Board 2 (CB 2) and neighboring communities to the north and south are overcrowded, with particularly large cohorts now in grades K-3, and

Whereas there are no public middle schools in CB 2, and only a few small middle schools on the west side of Community School District 2, and

Whereas charter schools, especially when they are co-located, undercut public education, and the Community Education Council of District 2 (CECD2) and many local parents oppose them, and

Whereas the brain maturation of young adolescents allows a deeper mastery of science, literature, second language fluency, and intellectual collaboration, and

Whereas the creative spirit of middle school children allows them to explore the arts, including music, drama, media, as well as the visual arts, and

Whereas pubescent children need exercise and health care in a safe setting to prevent eating disorders, obesity, drug use, and high-risk sexual activity, and

Whereas many local institutions, including The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Children's Museum of the Arts, Google and others have expressed a desire to enrich the program at 75 Morton, and

Whereas the community also needs a small District 75 school for 4th-8th grade children who are diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD), and

Whereas hundreds of parents, educators, political leaders, community groups, and others have secured the building at 75 Morton Street as a public, non-charter school, and wholeheartedly support opening a new middle school in September 2015, and

Whereas the 75 Morton Envisioning Group was formed in January 2013 to develop community consensus and includes parents, educators and administrators from elementary school communities from the west side of Community School District 2 above Canal Street, west to Chinatown, north to 59th Street, and

Whereas the community has reached consensus regarding grade configuration, building design principles, District 75 programming and a community school model, and

Whereas enthusiasm for a middle school at 75 Morton includes CB 1, 4, and 5 and

Whereas the Department of Education and the School Construction Authority continue to welcome community advice regarding the design and program for 75 Morton.

Therefore be it resolved that 75 Morton be renovated to support one mid-size (600-700 students) public middle school and a small (70-100 students) District 75 school for children with ASD, and

Be it further resolved that, in addition to classrooms, 75 Morton should have enlarged windows, improved natural light, and ample space for a full range of school activities, including: a full gymnasium; a half gymnasium/dance/fitness room; a swimming pool; an outdoor play area; a large cafeteria that can seat half of the student body at once; an auditorium with a stage; laboratories for science, technology and language; media, music and sound rooms; a green roof with gardening; a library; resource rooms and workspaces with alcoves; partitioned areas and small rooms for students to work together; and a health clinic with private spaces for treatment and advice regarding sex, drugs, growth, and nutrition; and

Be it further resolved that, the District 75 school include two state-of-the-art sensory gyms, private therapy rooms, its own entrance to the building, and adequate shared facilities with the public middle school to ensure separate scheduling for District 75 students, and

Be it further resolved that the collaboration between the Envisioning Group, CB2, CECD2, SCA, and the DOE continue with consultation and input from everyone as the design and program are refined through a Fall 2015 opening.