

P.S. 235 Secures Funding For 10 Classroom Expansion



P.S. 235 Parents Association President Daniel Joseph.

By Craig McGuire

They were repeatedly told it could not be done, but the tireless efforts of dedicated parents at one East Flatbush school have moved the Board of Education to action.

"We've been struggling to get an addition onto P.S. 235 (at 525 Lenox Road) for over a year now," said Parents Association President Daniel Joseph. "It was a battle with the school board, which told us there would not be funding available for the project."

"I should say that Superintendent [Harvey] Garner was helpful in getting the addition," added Joseph.

At the working session of the school board on June 27, Garner informed board members and parents that the central board had confirmed the addition.

"This man did something that could not be done," said Garner, praising Joseph.

"Like most of the schools in East Flatbush, P.S. 235 is experiencing difficulties due to the overcrowded conditions," said Joseph, a resident of the community for the past eight years.

"We met with representatives from the school board at least three times," said Joseph, one of which was attended by Schools Chancellor Ramon Cortines. "And it was the chancellor who saw the reasoning behind the request."

With a student body of approximately 1,300 students, overcrowding has been a constant problem at P.S. 235.

"We are very excited about the addition," said P.S. 235 Principal Maryanne Digangi, "to help us address many of the problems caused by overcrowded classrooms."

"The chancellor is obviously extremely concerned about the overcrowded conditions of many schools in

the school system," said Board of Education spokesman Bob Terte.

While \$2 million has been allocated for the 10-classroom pre-fabricated addition, a construction date has yet to be set.

"Earlier this year, a site was proposed at 5811 Ditmas Avenue, several miles from the main school, as an annex," said Joseph. "This would have further divided an already fractionalized school."

P.S. 235 already operates an annex located at East 49th and Avenue D, approximately two miles from the main building.

That annex houses six classes and approximately 180 students.

"Not only would the student body have been disrupted by further fractionalizing the school," said Joseph, "but also the parent body of P.S. 235."

"We feel that would have been counter-productive

in the spirit of cooperation of the Compact for Learning," explained Joseph.

The Compact for Learning focuses on parent involvement in curriculum development.

The Ditmas annex would have cost taxpayers an estimated \$7 million.

"The \$2 million cost of the addition," said Joseph "is much cheaper and cost-effective."

"The chancellor has indicated preference in many instances of pre-fabs instead of leasing," said Terte, "to address the problems of space."

"The parents and the whole school community are anxious to see what the building will offer," said Digangi. "And they are anxious to see the plans when they are made available."

Terte said a meeting with parents is being arranged.

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