

ADRIANO ESPAILLAT
13TH DISTRICT OF NEW YORK



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
July, 21, 2017

New York State Board of Regents
NYS Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12234

To the Honorable Members of the NYS Board of Regents,

I am writing to express my support for Harlem Hebrew Language Academy's application for renewal and expansion of its charter. I have long been a supporter of this school, and recently spoke with a delegation of foreign diplomats visiting with the school to learn about efforts to better integrate our diverse city's public schools. As New York City and New York State struggle with issues around school integration, Harlem Hebrew is a model for a thoughtful embrace of diversity.

A diverse-by-design public school that focused on engaged global citizenship, Harlem Hebrew is one of the most integrated schools in New York City. It is 30% Latino, 33% Black or African American, 34% white, 1% Asian, and has many multiracial students. This student body is more diverse than most other schools in Community School District 3, in which Harlem Hebrew is located. Importantly, this integration also occurs at the classroom level, encouraging meaningful social and academic interaction.

Harlem Hebrew serves students from all backgrounds: 8% of Harlem Hebrew students are English language learners, nearly a quarter are students with special needs, and half are economically disadvantaged - some with insecure housing situations. Study after study show that students learn better when in diverse educational settings. Differences in ethnicity, economic status, family situation, housing status, race, national origin, and parents' educational attainment all make for a dynamic learning environment that encourages all types of students. Expansion of Harlem Hebrew's charter to include 6th, 7th, and 8th grades will provide stability to allow the school to grow its diverse student population, and better serve the Harlem community. Its 5th graders will rise to 3 more years in the same building, a private space being renovated, and younger students will have an exciting learning future to look forward to with an important expectation of consistency.

I am pleased to learn that Regent Mead recently visited Harlem Hebrew, and that Regent Cashin visited its "sister school" in southern Brooklyn, Hebrew Language Academy. Harlem Hebrew, and all the schools in the Hebrew Public network, prioritize constant dialogue between schools, authorizers, and public officials.

I sincerely hope Harlem Hebrew's application for charter renewal and expansion meets with your approval. Please reach out to Mark Howell at Mark.Howell@mail.house.gov in my office with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Adriano', with a long, sweeping horizontal line underneath.

Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress