



Alliance For Progress

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

The Bronx: Our Perspective

Asks anyone about almost any topic and you will find that everyone has an opinion. An opinion is formed by facts, whether in part or in whole given an individual's knowledge or ignorance concerning the topic at hand.

Recently, the Citizen Community for NYC (CCNYC) asked Bronx residents about their most pressing concerns. Crime, clean air and streets, open space (recreational areas), good public schools, quiet neighborhoods, and non-responsive public officials are residents' worries¹. Although the level of concern for each category varies across the borough, a simple look at the West Bronx (zip codes 10451, 10452, 10456 and 10457), one finds that there is a reason to be concerned. There are several open spaces² but a limited number of authentic recreational areas² for residents to exercise and utilize at leisure. Furthermore, although the overall crime has dropped as compared to the 1990s, grand larceny and robbery are on the rise when compared to last year³.

CCNYC found that many participants were dissatisfied with the small number of or complete lack of youth programs and the availability of affordable housing⁴. In addition, CCNYC found that the lack of known program opportunities and leisure time the most often cited reason for the lack of involvement by area residents. What do you say?

Traditionally, neighborhoods with good schools are better off socio-economically. These schools generally have fully funded school libraries and promote a school culture that strives for academic excellence. Yet, several local public schools are overcrowded and fail to provide a holistic school culture for its students.

According to the NYC Comptroller's Policy Report entitled Growing Pains: Reforming Department of Education capital planning to keep pace with NYC's Residential Construction Community School District 9 (Mott Haven, Morrisania, Lower Concourse, Highbridge, Mt. Eden, Tremont and Morris Heights) have an average capacity of 90.02%. However, the

Comptroller's report states that these same schools are converting science labs, gymnasiums, art and music rooms into regular instruction classrooms.

As schools [convert] some of its cluster space to classrooms to accommodate influxes of new students, these converted classrooms become part of its classroom capacity going forward⁵.

Several local public schools are overcrowded and fail to provide a holistic culture for its students.

This is the case with a home economic classroom at PS/MS 218 (167 St. and Gerard Ave.). The classroom is usually filled with 30 or more students, six stoves and numerous wall cabinets. In which students are taught every discipline except home economics. Moreover, the report indicates that

[a] school cited as at 90 percent of capacity may have all its cluster space, intact, whereas a school at 115 percent of capacity may have virtually no cluster space remaining, and the two measures of capacity are not comparable⁶.

Larger classroom sizes offer students less individual attention and converted cluster spaces offer students limited or no art, music, or science instruction, diminishing the opportunity for students to receive a well-rounded and thorough education. What do you think?

The Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy release a report in which it indicated that the Bronx has a vulnerable housing market with the lowest number of home purchase lending in 1996, the second lowest in 2006 and the highest rate of foreclosures in NYC⁷.

The same report stated that Bronx residents pay the most in rent and live in buildings with the highest number of serious housing code violations⁸. Interesting enough, the Bronx

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Alliance For Progress
1070 Ogden Avenue, Suite CS – 2
Bronx, NY 10452
Tel.: 718-992-6448
Website: www.allianceprogress.org

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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The Advocacy Project – Mission Statement

The mission of the AFP Advocacy Project is to influence public policy on issues that affect residents of the West Bronx: affordable housing, education, employment, immigration, job development and nutrition; at the local, state and national level. The Advocacy Project is committed to raising the awareness of legislators and the public of the diverse problems confronting the residents of the West Bronx.

has the highest rate of babies born with low birth weight⁹ and the highest rate of infant mortality in NYC, which may be due to a variety of factors such as poor nutrition, teen pregnancy and the lack of communal support, employment, education or proper medical coverage.

The report also stated that the average Bronx household made \$31,949 a year and the Bronx has the highest poverty rate in NYC since 1990.

So what is your opinion? Let us know by writing to:
AFP – Advocacy Project
1070 Ogden Avenue, Suite CS – 2
Bronx, NY 10452

View the cited Reports online!

- [Citizen Community for NYC](#)
- [Growing Pains: Reforming Department of Education](#)
- [Furman Center for Real Estate & Urban Policy](#)

1. *Cf.* Speak Out New York p. 32
2. *Cf.* NYC Oasis Search Map of the West Bronx
3. *Cf.* NYPD CompStats for the 40th, 44th, and 46th Precinct
4. *Cf.* Speak Out New York p. 4
5. *Cf.* Growing Pains: Reforming Department of Education p. 17
6. *Ibid.*, p. 17
7. *Cf.* Furman Center for Real Estate & Urban Policy: Bronx p. 48
8. *Ibid.*, p. 48
9. *Ibid.*, p. 48