



June 20, 2018

Michael Sabatino
Council Member
Education Committee Chair
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Yonkers, NY 10701

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Rev. Steve Lopez, President
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Trustees of the Board of Education

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John Jacono
Pasquale Mondesando
Edgar Santana
Dr. Nader J. Sayegh

Dear Council Member Sabatino,

Let us begin by thanking the City Council and you personally for supporting the Trustees agenda to provide quality education for all of the students and families we serve.

This letter is regarding last night's Education Committee agenda item, *1. Resolution of the City Council to recognize the two annual Muslim High-Holy-Days of Eid-UI-Fitr and Eid-UI-Adha in the Public School calendar.* The Trustees and Superintendent of Schools actively embrace and appreciate the diversity of our city, and encourage inclusivity in our schools instruction and multi-cultural activities. In fact, the Islamic New Year and the beginning and end of Ramadan are acknowledged on the District calendar distributed to our families and staff. In addition, last year the Trustees and the Superintendent met with members of the Mayor's Muslim American Advisory Council Board to discuss this and other questions.

One of our responsibilities under New York State Education Law Article 52, which delineates large city Board of Education Trustees unfettered authority to control and direct the education of the public school children, includes but is not limited to setting the school district calendar. The calendar is adopted annually in April based on the recommendation of the Superintendent's Calendar Committee comprised of parents, representatives from our bargaining units and Central Office administrators.

There are many required factors in developing the District's calendar. The New York State Education Department's *Attendance and the School Calendar: Guidelines and Reporting for State Aid Purposes* includes requirements such as districts must be in session for all students, including students with disabilities, for not less than 180 days and the legal holidays public schools must be closed. Every day below the 180 days requirement may result in a loss of approximately \$1.1 million in aid to the school

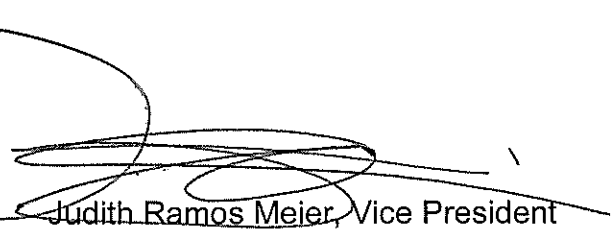
district; something this District cannot afford. Our employee contracts have a specific start date and winter recess requirements aligned with the Southern Westchester BOCES calendar. Inclement weather days also must be considered. Unlike New York City, snow days in Yonkers significantly impedes everyone's ability to drive in our city; in some cases, the Mayor has declared States of Emergency. Our priority is the safe transport of students, coupled with the ability for staff to get to work.

Please consider moving forward that inquiries regarding the Board of Education's policies or procedures be directed to the Board President or the Superintendent of Schools rather than proceeding with a resolution that is not the purview of the City Council. We share a common goal for our city, to provide quality public education for our residents. The Yonkers Public Schools is delivering on this goal, it's supported by data. Nonetheless, to address the needs of *all* children there is much more work that needs to be done. The Trustees and Superintendent are eager to accomplish our goal hand-in-hand with the City Council and the Mayor.

Sincerely,




Rev. Steve Lopez, President



Judith Ramos Meier, Vice President

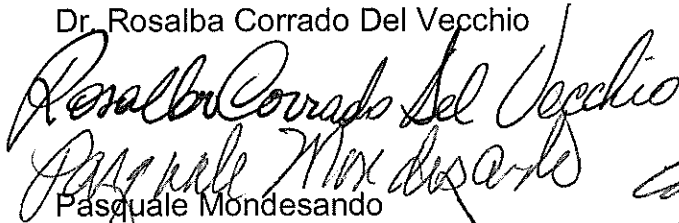


Andrea Brown



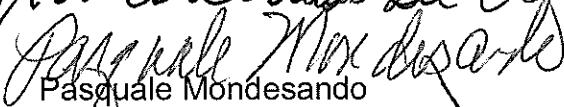
Kevin Cacace

Dr. Rosalba Corrado Del Vecchio



John Jacono

Pasquale Mondesando



Edgar Santana

Dr. Nader J. Sayegh



- C:
- Mayor Mike Spano
 - Mike Khader, President, and Members of the Yonkers City Council
 - Dr. Edwin M. Quezada, Superintendent of Schools
 - Sally Pinto, President, YCPTA/PTSA and Officers
 - Jane Wermuth, President, Yonkers Council of Administrators
 - Samantha Rosado-Ciriello, President, Yonkers Federation of Teachers
 - Lionel Turner, President, Yonkers CSEA
 - Lou Picani, President, Teamsters 456