

STOP THE PUBLIC SCHOOL MADRASSA COMMUNITY COALITION

<http://stopthemadrassa.wordpress.com>

STOP THE MADRASSA is a grass roots coalition of citizen groups and individuals concerned about the NYC Department of Education's non-responsive posture regarding the creation of a new public school to teach Arabic history, culture and language: the **Khalil Gibran International Academy (KGIA)**. The school is projected to open soon - in September 2007 – but Mayor Bloomberg and the NY Department of Education have refused to answer the public's questions. The community's concerns have been dismissed and silenced by the school bureaucrats. City and state officials who are creating this special Arabic/Middle Eastern public school have either failed to properly conduct the necessary background and preparatory work to open such a school, or they are purposefully evading their legal obligations to inform the public of the status of their work.

We ask the authorities of New York City and the State of New York to reconsider the opening of this badly managed and inflammatory educational “experiment” for this fall’s semester.

After parents at Park Slope in Brooklyn successfully opposed the Department of Education's placement of KGIA in their building, the City placed the school at 345 Dean Street in Boerum Hill, Brooklyn, a building that currently houses the Brooklyn High School of the Arts and the Math and Science Exploratory Middle School. **We demand to know why.**

To date, despite numerous requests, the City has provided no explanation to members of the coalition or the public at large about the precise nature of the curricula, the text books that will be used, the publishers of those texts, or the lesson plans. Further, no one from the City has provided information about the selection process of the teachers for the “Arabic” and “Middle Eastern” subjects, whether they will be certified, and if not, how they will be effectively supervised. **We demand to know why.**

Our citizens coalition continues to investigate and protest the school by all possible means, including our New York City chapters of the United American Committee, NY-ICE, Gathering of Eagles, the Center for Vigilant Freedom, and a wide variety of neighborhood groups, online forums and individuals. We attend PTA meetings and community meetings, conduct constant letter-writing campaigns to media and authorities, to Mayor Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein in particular. Our activists are taking this fight to the media and the questions about the school continue to be raised by the N.Y. Sun (<http://www.nysun.com/specials/gibran.php>) and major blogs. We have submitted two Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests for curricula materials and other documents, but have received nothing to date. On July 23, our lawyer submitted a third FOIL Request to New York City and the state. **We demand answers to our questions.**

Why is there so much pressure to open this school in September 2007 without going through the usual and proper procedures for review? Why are community and parent concerns not being answered now, before the school opens in any location? Why is this school being given preferential treatment at the expense of existing schools in the New York City Public School system? These and many other questions remain unanswered. **Yet even as our questions go unanswered, our coalition has continued to grow.**

Chancellor Joel Klein has attempted to deflect all public inquiry with a statement-of-reassurance regarding KGIA : "If any school became a religious school, as some people say Khalil Gibran would be, or it became a national school, in the sense that it really wasn't an American public school, I would shut it down," said Klein. "I promise you that." [source <http://www.ny1.com/ny1/content/index.jsp?stid=9&aid=69409>]

Keep your promise, Mr. Klein. Shut down the Khalil Gibran International Academy. Now.

Please Contact: Sara Springer at EDINBKLYN@aol.com or Pamela Hall at PamelaHall07@yahoo.com

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This school opens in September!

- WHEN will our questions regarding faculty and curricula be addressed?
- Has anyone who reads Arabic seen the textbooks that will be used?
- Will certified teachers who are Coptic Christian Arabs, Sephardic Jews, and Christian Arabs be recruited?
- Which Arabic history of the Middle East will be taught? The Islamic? The Christian? The Jewish?
- Who will teach American and European History, Math, English?
- Will KGIA meet the N.Y. State guidelines for a NYC Public school?
- Will students be taught in English?
- How can a new school open when the proper forms and deadlines have NOT been met?
- How will the prayer requests of KGIA's Muslim students be accommodated in a public school?
- What will be the reaction to someone eating a pork or ham sandwich if they are in proximity of one of KGIA's students?

- Will Halal food be served in the cafeteria?
- Will KGIA's students be part of the general school population or sequestered and separated?
- Will there be concessions made to accommodate the "modesty" requirements of Muslim students?
- How will wudu, or the process of ritual washing - which must precede prayer - take place? In the public lavatories?
- What will happen if someone says "Osama" within earshot of a KGIA student? Are KGIA and the NYC Department of Education prepared to defend themselves against such lawsuits from CAIR and deal with the resultant bad publicity?
- Has anyone seen the lesson plans?
- Is the Principal certified according to specific N.Y. State qualifications?

These are only some of the legitimate questions and concerns that NYC parents and taxpayers have regarding KGIA. Why has the New York City Department of Education not offered Arabic as a language block throughout the NY Public School system? Our coalition acknowledges the need for more Arabic speakers, but why create a whole school to teach one language? Why encourage the isolation and non-assimilation of Arabic speaking students by creating a school within a school, with a focus on an Arabic viewpoint for teaching world history? Principal Dhabah Almontaser has been quoted as saying the Arabic classes will not even be offered during school hours and will be taught from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m, so the Islamic culture and history components will be the daily emphasis.

The Stop the Madrassa Community Coalition remains at the center of this fight for integrity in our public schools. For further information see <http://stopthemadrassa.wordpress.com>.

Keep your promise, Mr. Klein. Shut down the Khalil Gibran International Academy. Now.

Volunteer Today! If you are concerned about Madrassa schools becoming part of the New York City public education tradition, please volunteer to help with media and community outreach, organizing, legal research (under the guidance of our lawyers and paralegals), investigations and research of Islamist curricula being used in New York City and nationwide.

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