

Directions: make a copy of this Google doc, or copy and paste it into a word document. Then, fill in everything in the brackets [] with your own information- your name, who you are, why West Side matters to you, and why it should not be relocated. Feel free to adapt this to fit your voice, and email it to [every member of the PEP](#) and every politician you can think of.

To the members of the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP),

My name is [PUT NAME HERE] and I am a [STUDENT/STAFF/PARENT/ALUM/RETIREE/ETC] of Edward A Reynolds West Side High School. I urge you to vote AGAINST the proposal to relocate West Side High School to the building at 105 E 106th St, and to vote FOR the wishes of the community: we want to save West Side.

West Side is a transfer high school- a school for students who have been pushed out, struggled, or didn't get what they needed at a traditional high school. West Side, as one of the oldest transfer schools in the city, serves disproportionate numbers of students who need **unconditional love, care, resources and support**: low-income students, majority Black and Brown students, students with disabilities, homeless students and those in temporary housing, students with major safety concerns due to gang violence and op warfare, and young parents. Dislocations and disruptions to these students' educational lives can be extremely harmful- to individuals, families, and communities.

The DOE is disregarding these factors in **its thoughtless, disrespectful, inequitable and dangerous decision** to relocate West Side to an office building on the East Side that will lack many of the elements that have made the school a success. In moving to the East Side, West Side will lose [CHOOSE ONE]:

- **Deep community connections, built over decades** that contribute to student safety and well-being. The school has been in the heart of the Frederick Douglass NYCHA houses for almost fifty years. Those deep connections make the school a treasure to the surrounding neighborhood, and have ensured students safe passage to and from school. In many neighborhoods, gang violence and rivalries are a constant threat, making everyday life and everyday decisions risky and even life-threatening. Without the connections and relationships to this neighborhood, gang violence and 'op' warfare would make attending school much more difficult and hazardous for students. Those connections would be absent on the East Side.
- **A comprehensive wellness program** including a full-size gym, kitchen, athletics program, and health center. West Side's PSAL sports programs have won the school numerous championships, and have contributed to students' sense of safety, community, and belonging. If you want to hear from students directly- listen to [this interview](#) with a West Side student and parent: <https://wbai.org/archive/program/episode/?id=39662>. This would heighten the existing segregation in access to PSAL sports for Black and Brown students in NYC. As the Fair Play Coalition has documented, "Black and Latino students are **more than twice as likely** as students of other races to attend a New York City public high school offering **no PSAL team opportunities whatsoever**" and "**On average, a Black or Latino student in New York City's public high schools attends**

a school with nearly ten fewer teams than students of other races.”

(<https://fairplaynyc.org/facts>). Transfer school students, disproportionately Black and Latino, deserve PSAL sports as much as any other student in NYC.

- **A L.Y.F.E. Center** provides childcare for teen parents- many of whom would not be able to attend high school regularly without dedicated childcare. The L.Y.F.E. Center is literally a lifeline for our student parents’ education, and is essential to West Side’s youngest community members- infants and small children- having a better life through their parents’ education.

West Side means so much to me and my community. [EXPLAIN WHY WEST SIDE MATTERS TO YOU. TALK ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH THE SCHOOL, THE STAFF, THE STUDENTS, AND COMMUNITY. HOW DID IT IMPACT YOU AND THE PEOPLE YOU CARE ABOUT? WE’RE TRYING TO EMPHASIZE CONNECTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY, SAFETY, OUR ATHLETICS AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS, AND THE LYFE CENTER]

West Side needs to stay in its home building and community because [EXPLAIN YOUR REASONS FOR WHY WEST SIDE SHOULD STAY IN ITS CURRENT LOCATION].

Our community needs West Side, and West Side needs our community. Save West Side, don’t move it! Let West Side Stay!

Sincerely,
[PUT NAME HERE]