



## Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

January 27, 2012

Dennis M. Walcott  
Chancellor  
Department of Education  
Tweed Courthouse  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chancellor Walcott:

With respect to the recent ruling by the United States Supreme Court concerning *Bronx Household of Faith v Board of Education*, it is my opinion that the Department of Education should further review and reconsider the current access policy for faith-based organizations to rent space within public school facilities.

Faith-based organizations that have a long standing relationship in their community should be given equal access to public school buildings on the same terms as any other organization, and those decisions should be made by individual school leadership teams and the communities those organizations serve. The DOE has given principals the right to make every other decision about the use of their physical plant, and their power should not be usurped when it comes to faith-based organizations and churches. Principals are in the best positions to determine both how their buildings can be used, and should be empowered to make such decisions.

The Department of Education should encourage schools to connect with their neighboring community organizations, in order to forge good relationships that can reverberate out into the community-at-large. Such relationships can have a direct positive effect on the school community and the families of the students that they serve.

I am requesting that the DOE review its current public school access policy to ensure that it is an inclusive policy that seeks to welcome partnerships with all community organizations both secular and faith-based.

Sincerely,

  
Ruben Diaz Jr.  
Bronx Borough President

cc: Fernando Cabrera  
NYC Council Member