



CITYWIDE EDUCATION COUNCIL FOR 75 DISTRICT

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District 75
Special Education

Resolution # 5 - Avonte's Law

WHEREAS, according to an article recently published in the *Pediatrics* journal, approximately half of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) engage in elopement behavior;

WHEREAS, such a behavior threatens the safety of children on the Autism Spectrum and places them at risk of injury or death;

WHEREAS, a recent Harvard University study based on the perception of social cues of danger in Autism Spectrum Disorders concluded that, while an inherent clue of a threat would “produce brain activation in attention, emotion processing and mental state attribution networks” in controlled participants, the effect was absent in participants with ASD;

WHEREAS, the absence of such a mechanism would prevent children with ASD from adequately perceiving threats and danger;

WHEREAS, in the present school year, at least five incidents of elopement involving children with ASD and young school-age children have been reported;

WHEREAS, in all the cases, the children abandoned their NYC Public School buildings unnoticed through doors deprived of sound alarms;

WHEREAS, one of these incidents led to the unjustified death of 14-year-old Avonte Oquendo;

WHEREAS, unfortunate events such as the death of Avonte Oquendo could be prevented by equipping all exit doors in NYC public school buildings with an alarm system and;

WHEREAS, such an alarm system would not require a colossal investment and;

WHEREAS, the safety policies and procedures currently in place proved obsolete in the prevention of the aforementioned incidents;

LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, we, the Citywide District 75 Council vehemently support the “Avonte Law” ratified by the New York City Council;

LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, the Citywide District 75 Council urges the New York City Council to generate more laws to protect our children from harm;

LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, the Citywide District 75 Council strongly urges the Department of Education to conduct a formal review of school safety policies and procedures to ensure that all school safety issues are effectively addressed;

LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, the Citywide District 75 Council strongly advises the Department of Education to act swiftly to hold school personnel accountable when school safety policies and procedures are not adequately enforced and lead to harm to the student body;

LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, the Citywide District 75 Council encourages the Department of Education to build alliances with community partners and first responders to design adequate emergency response plans to prevent further harm to our children;

LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, the Citywide District 75 Council strongly encourages the Department of Education to take actions to remediate safety issues, including appropriate training for staff to prevent further incidents and keep our children out of harm's way.

Alona Conner
Council Member Signature & Title

1/7/15
Date

[Signature]
Council Member Signature & Title

1/7/2015
Date