City College establishes medical school with St. Barnabas Hospital

7/16/2015, 12:02 p.m.

Members of the Sophie Davis School’s class of 2016 will be the first to enter CCNY’s new medical school.

In a major development in the institution’s 168-year history, the City College of New York announced the establishment of the CUNY School of Medicine at City College in partnership with Bronx-based St. Barnabas Hospital, which is part of the SBH Health System.

The new Harlem-based medical school, whose first class is scheduled to begin fall 2016, will be an expansion of City College’s Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education. Established in 1973 on the City College campus, the Sophie Davis School currently offers a unique seven-year BS/MD program that integrates an undergraduate education with the first two years of medical school.

The new medical school on the City College campus builds on the strong record of achievement of the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education, whose mission is recruiting underrepresented minorities into medicine, increasing medical care in historically underserved communities and boosting the number of primary care physicians.
City College establishes medical school with St. Barnabas Hospital

7/16/2015, 12:02 p.m.

Members of the Sophie Davis School's class of 2016 will be the first to enter CCNY's new medical school.

In a major development in the institution's 168-year history, the City College of New York announced the establishment of the CUNY School of Medicine at City College in partnership with Bronx-based St. Barnabas Hospital, which is part of the SBH Health System.

The new Harlem-based medical school, whose first class is scheduled to begin fall 2016, will be an expansion of City College's Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education. Established in 1973 on the City College campus, the Sophie Davis School currently offers a unique seven-year BS/MD program that integrates an undergraduate education with the first two years of medical school.

The new medical school on the City College campus builds on the strong record of achievement of the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education, whose mission is recruiting underrepresented minorities into medicine, increasing medical care in historically underserved communities and boosting the number of primary care physicians.

City College President Lisa S. Coico said the newly established school would nurture young students to embrace a career focused on caring for their fellow citizens with passion, empathy and respect.

"The need for more physicians in many communities in our city, particularly in the communities
surrounding City College, remains dire,” she said. “By establishing this resource, City College is both helping to address this critical need and fulfilling a vital community service.”

City College Provost Maurizio Trevisan said the Sophie Davis School, of which he is also dean, is the perfect foundation for the new medical school.

“The new medical school will continue the unique mission by providing young students from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to pursue a medical career that focuses on providing health care to the underserved communities of New York State,” Trevisan added.

“In doing so, the school remains true to the mission of City College founder Townsend Harris, who stated, ‘Let the children of the rich and the poor take their seat together and know of no distinction.’”

Scott Cooper, MD, president and CEO of SBH Health System, hailed the partnership.

“Like City College, we have a congruent mission to provide quality care to underserved communities,” he said. “With our combined resources and commitment, those facing health disparities will have more than good reason to hope.”

Operating on the City College campus in Harlem with its clinical campus at St. Barnabas Hospital, the new school is the only medical school in the CUNY system.

Since 1847, the City College of New York has provided low-cost, high-quality education for New Yorkers in a wide variety of disciplines. More than 15,000 students pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees in the College of Liberal Arts and Science; the Bernard and Anne Spitzer School of Architecture; the School of Education; the Grove School of Engineering; the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education; and the Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership. U.S. News & World Report, Princeton Review and Forbes all rank City College among the best colleges and universities in the United States.

St. Barnabas Hospital and its sister facilities in the Bronx are now known as SBH Health System. In addition to its flagship hospital, which features the hospital’s state-of-the-art Ambulatory Care and Hemodialysis centers, SBH Health System encompasses Fordham-Tremont Mental Health Center, the St. Barnabas Rehabilitation & Continuing Care Center and the Southern Medical Group.
Waterfront construction unearths more than 100 ancient artifacts

By Rich Calder
July 20, 2015 | 12:02am

A $2.9 million project to improve waterfront access in the Bronx unearthed a priceless find — more than 100 pieces of Native American artifacts dating back to 200 AD.

Experts are calling the trove of ceramics, pottery, stone tools and other artifacts found in
the southeastern section of Pelham Bay Park one of the most important archaeological finds in New York City history.

"The findings are pretty spectacular," said Amanda Sutphin, director of archaeology for the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission, who gave The Post an exclusive tour of the tree-lined site overlooking Eastchester Bay.

Tests show the rare artifacts date back to between 200 AD and 1000 AD — centuries before European settlers made contact with Native Americans, she added.

Sutphin was especially impressed with the condition of the ceramics, which she believes were once used for eating and food preparation.

"I’ve never seen anything like it found in New York City before," she said.

The first of the artifacts were dug up in 2012, but more extensive excavation work and testing done in the past year through last month made it clear to city officials they were sitting on history worthy of additional exploration.

Some of the artifacts were uncovered just two feet below ground, and city officials said early evidence shows the site was likely once a meeting place for Native Americans who would go there to harvest clams and other food.

The findings have now put the Parks Department "in an unusual place to be in," said Marcha Johnson, a landscape architect with the agency.

The waterfront-access project — which includes removing a deteriorating seawall and adding a walking path, dog run and other amenities — will "eventually" be completed, but the "top priority" now is ensuring the artifacts are protected, she added.

Construction on the project was formally put on hold last month.

The blast from the past may now force the city to redesign the waterfront project to go around the archaeological site, officials said. The city may also attempt to protect the historic area from future development by declaring it a landmark, although no decisions have yet been made.

A Brooklyn College archaeology class will explore the site further for the city as part of a three-week class project in August. All significant artifacts uncovered will be publicly showcased at the city's Archaeological Repository in Midtown.

To avoid looting, the city has already covered up the dig areas located within a mere acre of
2,772-acre Pelham Bay Park, the largest park in the city.

The Brooklyn College class and other future city-sanctioned digs will have to rely on GPS tracking equipment to find these areas.

The site is not far from where religious rebel Anne Hutchinson and her family were famously killed in 1643 by Siwanoy Native Americans. The English immigrant set up a small colony there in a bid to escape religious persecution.

It's unknown if the Siwanoy Native Americans who attacked Hutchinson were descendants of the Native Americans whose artifacts the city uncovered, Sutphin said.

"It's a great question," she said.
Happy birthday to the woman who revolutionized endocrinology

BY DR. HOWARD MARKEI July 19, 2015 at 8:00 AM EDT

Today we celebrate the birthdate of the second woman to receive the Nobel Prize for Medicine or Physiology, an accolade too typically awarded to males. Her name is Rosalyn Yalow and she received this great honor in 1977. (The first woman to receive the Nobel Prize for medicine or physiology, incidentally, was Gerty Theresa Cori, in 1947. Eight women have won the medicine or physiology award since).

Dr. Yalow was a medical physicist who co-discovered the radioimmunoassay, an exquisitely sensitive means of using “radioactive tracers” to measure hormones in the bloodstream, such as insulin, thyroid, reproductive and growth hormones, as well as levels of vitamins, viruses and many other substances in the body.

A sample size of only a few drops of blood is required to make these critical determinations, which not only saved lives and guided medical care but was also used, for example, to prevent mental retardation for thyroid hormone deficient babies still in the womb. For decades it has been a major tool in clinical medicine and medical research. Indeed, her work revolutionized the field of endocrinology, the study of diseases of hormonal systems.
Yalow's origins were humble and she conducted her entire life and career with humility and grace. She was born in the Bronx on July 19, 1921, to an immigrant mother and a father from New York's Lower East Side, neither of whom completed high school. In 1941, at age 19, Yalow graduated magna cum laude from Hunter College, the all-women's college of the tuition-free City University of New York, majoring in physics. Initially fascinated by chemistry, she became attracted to physics after reading Eve Curie's 1937 biography of her famous mother, Madame Marie Curie, who studied the effects of radioactivity and won the Nobel twice (for physics in 1903 and chemistry in 1911).

Gaining acceptance into graduate school, however, was no easy task. As the New York Times reported in Yalow's obituary on June 1, 2011, when one of her Hunter professors recommended her for a graduate assistant's position in physics at Purdue University, a skeptical physicist wrote back, "She is from New York. She is Jewish. She is a woman. If you can guarantee her a job afterward, we'll give her an assistantship."

There was no guaranteed job and the position at Purdue fell through. That now-forgotten physicist at Purdue had no clue regarding the mettle of this courageous and determined woman. Yalow subsequently took a job as a secretary at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, taking additional courses in physics. Once World War II began, however, opportunities for women to assume roles traditionally held by men began to open up a bit. As a result, she was offered a teaching assistantship at the University of Illinois College of Engineering in Champagne-Urbana. With glee and excitement of pursuing her dreams, she tore up her stenographer's pads and moved to the Midwest.

Once there, Yalow learned that she was the only woman in a group of 400 teaching fellows and professors. After receiving an A- in a lab course, the chairman of the physics department taunted her with the observation that women did not do well with laboratory work. She proved him wrong in ways she could not even have dreamed in 1945, when she received her Ph.D.

Moving back to New York, she again had trouble finding a job and taught at Hunter College as well as doing "volunteer" (read: unpaid) medical research at Columbia, where she was introduced to the nascent fields of radiation medicine and radiotherapy. In 1947, she moved to the Bronx Veterans Affairs Medical Center and in 1950 she joined its staff, full-time, where
she worked for the remainder of her professional career.

It was at this point in time that she met her longtime collaborator, a brilliant young internist named Solomon A. Berson. They taught each other medicine and physics and then developed and perfected the radioimmunoassay, beginning in 1959. Because Berson died in 1972 and the Nobel Prize is never given posthumously, he did not share in the award. To commemorate his work, however, Dr. Yalow named her laboratory after Dr. Berson, so that every paper she subsequently wrote would carry his name. Dr. Yalow was also elected to the National Academy of Science in 1975 and won the prestigious Lasker Award in 1976.

Yalow was known for being single-minded in her devotion to her research and her family. She met her husband Aaron Yalow in 1943, while both were physics graduate students at the University of Illinois. He, too, was a medical physicist and worked at the Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx. They had two children and two grandchildren, lived in Riverdale, New York, less than a mile from her laboratory, and were married for nearly 50 years before Aaron died in 1992.

In 1982, Dr. Yalow gave an informal speech to a group of schoolchildren about the joys and tribulations of a career as a scientist. Enthralling the youngsters with her dedication, brilliance and modesty, Dr. Yalow told the kids, “Initially, new ideas are rejected. Later they become dogma. And if you’re really lucky, you can publish your rejections as part of your Nobel presentation.”

Dr. Yalow may have been “lucky,” but she really made her own luck by being incredibly smart, determined and talented.

Happy Birthday, Rosalyn Yalow, you are a true heroine of science.
Dr. Howard Markel writes a monthly column for the PBS NewsHour, highlighting the anniversary of a momentous event that continues to shape modern medicine. He is the director of the Center for the History of Medicine and the George E. Wantz Distinguished Professor of the History of Medicine at the University of Michigan.

He is the author or editor of 10 books, including “Quarantine! East European Jewish Immigrants and the New York City Epidemics of 1892,” “When Germs Travel: Six Major Epidemics That Have Invaded America Since 1900 and the Fears They Have Unleashed” and “An Anatomy of Addiction: Sigmund Freud, William Halsted, and the Miracle Drug Cocaine.”
Students spend summertime in STEM program

July 16, 2015

Kingsborough Community College freshmen started a two-week summer boot camp Thursday to learn more about science, technology, engineering and math.

The STEM program will give students hands-on experience with using alternative energy, 3-D printing in manufacturing technology, and biomedical engineering.

"They spend about a week in this lab and then they spend another week in our actual college science labs working with our outstanding faculty," Kingsborough Community College President Farley Herzek says.

Kingsborough Community College and other CUNY schools received over $50 million to support their STEM education programs.
U.S. Rep Gregory W. Meeks Statement on Department of Education Grants to St. John's University and CUNY for FY 2016

BYLINE: Targeted News Service

LENGTH: 302 words

DATELINE: NEW YORK

Rep. Gregory W. Meeks, D-N.Y. (6th CD), issued the following news release:

Congressman Gregory Meeks released the following statement regarding the Department of Education awarding $219,603 to St. John's University and two grants totaling $484,479 to the City University of New York's York College:

"I am proud to announce that the Department of Education will direct nearly half a million dollars in Student Support Service grants to two of New York City's premier colleges, St. John's University and CUNY's York College for Fiscal Year 2016. These grants will assist low-income students, first-generation college students, and students with disabilities, providing them with the resources they need to succeed. I applaud the Department of Education for awarding these grants and extend my gratitude to those counselors, tutors, professors, and others who work day in and day out to help college students learn and achieve.

"We at York are delighted with the outcome of this grant application," said Dr. Marcia V. Keizs, President of York College, CUNY. "Our Students Support Services program will use these funds to the tremendous benefit of our students. I extend the College's sincere thanks to the Department of Education and to Congressman Meeks for his ongoing support of York College."

"St. John's University is grateful for the efforts of Congressman Gregory Meeks in securing grants for our students to attend college and realize their dreams. These Student Support Service grants perfectly align with our Catholic and Vincentian mission to afford students in need, in New York and across the globe, an opportunity to obtain a quality education and earn their degrees," said Conrado (Bobby) Gempesaw, Ph.D., President, St. John's University."

Copyright Targeted News Services
There's still time to enroll in fall 2015 classes at Bronx Community College

Friday, July 17, 2015, 3:43 PM

Sponsor content provided by CUNY Bronx Community College

It's not too late to join the ranks of students heading off to college this September. At Bronx Community College, located on a green and tranquil, 45-acre, landmark campus in the borough's University Heights section, students interested in launching their college careers this fall can simply walk into the BCC admissions office and sign up for their first classes in everything from math to music, biology to business, how to make movies to how to maintain today's more technologically advanced cars and some 30 other programs.

The college calls it "On-the-spot Admissions," and it could be the first step on your journey to a better future. An associate degree from BCC can prepare you to enter a four-year college of your choice and provide you with an opportunity to maximize your earnings and career advancement.

While the value of a BCC education is high, the cost is not. BCC is part of the City University of New York (CUNY), the country's oldest public university system, internationally recognized for providing a quality accessible education. In 2014, annual tuition and fees averaged $4,855 for New York City residents. But thanks to generous financial aid packages, seven out of 10 full-time BCC students pay no tuition at all — and eight out of 10 BCC students graduate with no college debt.

BCC students often live busy lives with many commitments — which the college recognizes and accommodates. Students with young children can leave them in the care of BCC's accredited,
on-campus preschool program and go off to class secure that their children are being cared for in an environment that is nurturing, stimulating and fun. For those with day time work or family commitments, BCC has evening and weekend classes. And there's plenty of tutoring, guidance and other support available — especially for that all-important first year.

At the same time, you can take advantage of a variety of enriching activities that enhance the college experience: a rich choice of student clubs; men's and women's intercollegiate sports; a vibrant Student Government Association that vigorously represents student interests; and opportunities to study or volunteer abroad.

So, how do you start?

Those interested in On-the-spot Admissions should come to BCC's admissions office located in Loew Hall, Room 224, Monday through Thursday, 11 a.m.—4 p.m. No appointment is necessary.

Applicants who haven't attended a college or university since they graduated high school should bring their official high school transcripts or GED diploma; a non-refundable $55 money order for the application fee; and proof of MMR immunization if they were born after Jan. 1, 1957. For those transferring from another college or university, the fee is $70, and they have to bring their official college transcripts from all colleges previously attended. (A high school or GED diploma is also required for all transfer students who have completed 24 credits or less).

For further information, contact the BCC admissions office at (718) 269-5895 or admission@bcc.cuny.edu.

About Bronx Community College

Bronx Community College of the City University of New York offers more than 30 academic programs that prepare students for careers and to continue their education at four-year colleges. Located on a 45-acre, tree-lined campus, BCC is home to the Hall of Fame for Great Americans, the country's first hall of fame. The college provides its approximately 11,500 students with quality academic programs, outstanding faculty, and flexible class schedules. BCC is a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), with students representing approximately 100 countries. In October 2012, the BCC campus was declared a National Historic Landmark, becoming the country’s first community college campus to receive such a designation. For more information about Bronx Community College, visit www.bcc.cuny.edu.
Why choose Kingsborough?

Monday, July 20, 2015, 9:55 AM

Sponsor content provided by CUNY Kingsborough Community College

The faculty: Imagine studying science with NASA researchers; culinary arts with industry professionals; or nursing with faculty in the field. You can at Kingsborough.

Cost: Tuition at CUNY is less than at most four-year public and private colleges, so you'll save money by completing your first two years here. You might also be eligible for scholarships available only to community college graduates. Plus: KCC's academic calendar consists of two 12-week sessions, each followed by a six-week module. NYC residents can earn up to 26 credits over an 18-week period for one flat rate — making it possible for some students to earn their associate degree in less than two years. (Talk to an advisor to see if you qualify.)

Choice: Choose from over 50 degree and certificate programs; you can take classes during the day, evening and/or weekends.

Award-winning learning communities: Join 25 other freshman in three linked courses for one semester, in a program that has been proven to help you succeed in college.

Student services: Whether it's academic advisement, free tutoring, low-cost professional childcare, assistance with accessibility issues, career training, or advice about your long-term goals, you'll find people and services ready to help you succeed.
Student clubs: With 80 clubs to choose from, you'll never be at a loss for something to do or people to meet.

Honors program: The honors program offers enriched academic experiences and co-curricular opportunities for highly-motivated students who want to enhance their Kingsborough education. Benefits include small, honors-only classes taught by dedicated faculty; opportunities to study off-campus and abroad; and membership in one of the nation's largest chapters of the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society.

Culture: KCC presents many free and low-cost community events each year, including lectures, a free summer music festival and professional arts events for adults and families. As a student, you'll get discounts to most ticketed events.

Sports: A member of the NJCAA and the CUNY Conference, KCC's Athletics Department offers a variety of intercollegiate teams, including men's and women's basketball, track, tennis, baseball and soccer teams, as well as women's volleyball. There's also a comprehensive intramural program in an award-winning gym and pool facility, covering many sports for men and women throughout the school year.

Beautiful campus: Being surrounded with beautiful views, architecture and art work is conducive to learning. You can find quiet places to study, or to gaze at the waterfront that hugs the campus on three sides. (Did we mention there's also a private beach?)

National acknowledgements:

- One of the top four community colleges in the nation (Aspen Institute, 2013)
- One of the top 10 community colleges in the nation (Aspen Institute, 2012)
- One of the top 120 community colleges in the nation (The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, 2011)
- Consistently ranks in the upper half of the top 100 community colleges in the country to award associate degrees to minority students and total number of associate degrees awarded (Community College Week)

Kingsborough Community College

For more information about enrolling at Kingsborough, call (718) 388-4000 or visit www.kbcc.cuny.edu.

TAGS: Fall Education Guide, CUNY Kingsborough Community College
Santander Provides Scholarships To York College Students

JULY 16, 2015 --

BOSTON, July 16, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- York College in New York City and Santander Bank, N.A. today announced a five-year philanthropic collaboration for the Bank's Santander Universities program to support the College's Merit Scholarship Program.

York College is part of The City University of New York (CUNY) system.

"By supporting this program, we can contribute to the academic enrichment students will receive by being Merit Scholars," said Josephine Moran, Santander region president for Metro New York and Northern New Jersey. "There are a variety of resources available to students who participate in this program to enhance their educational experience and help them reach their full potential. We look forward to building this relationship with York College."

Santander will provide scholarships to incoming freshmen and transfer students with a CUNY Associates Degree to help with their tuition and other educational expenses. Students enrolled in The Merit Scholarship Program receive personalized advising sessions, early registration opportunities, and exclusive access to campus events. They also receive funding to participate in study abroad opportunities. With support from Santander, more than a dozen students will be able to participate in the Merit Scholarship Program over the next five years.

"York College continues to lead the way in making higher education more accessible to students looking for a gateway to the twenty-first century economy," said York College President Marcia V. Keizs. "We are proud to partner with Santander Bank as we look for innovative opportunities to leverage the involvement of corporate leaders interested in helping make college completion a reality for our young people."

About Us

York College, a senior college of The City University of New York (CUNY), offers baccalaureate degrees in the liberal arts and sciences, accounting and business, journalism, communications technology, computer science, social work, teacher education and various health professions including nursing and physician assistant studies. York is the only CUNY senior college offering majors in gerontology, biotechnology, information systems management, aviation management; and a BS/MS in occupational therapy. For more information: http://www.york.cuny.edu

Santander Bank, N.A. is one of the largest retail banks in the United States by deposits. Its main corporate offices are in Boston and it operates principally in Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island.
Santander’s 9,800 employees serve its 2.1 million customers through more than 670 branches and approximately 2,100 ATMs, call centers, website and mobile app. Supervised by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency and a member of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Santander in the United States is a wholly-owned, financially autonomous subsidiary of Banco Santander (NYSE: SAN), a global commercial and retail bank. For more information about Santander, visit www.santanderbank.com or call 877-766-2265.

**Santander Universities** was founded in 1996 to advance the Santander Group’s commitment to its communities by supporting higher education. It provides funding for teaching and research, international cooperation, knowledge and technology transfer, entrepreneurial initiatives, student exchange and innovation. It maintains more than 1,100 agreements with universities and research centers worldwide, including 35 in the United States through Santander Bank. Since 1996, Santander Universities has provided funding for 4,100 university projects globally. Every year in the United States, Santander Universities funds more than 1,000 scholarships and supports over 70 initiatives. For more information about Santander Universities, visit www.santanderbank.com/us/universities.

**MEDIA CONTACTS:**
Danielle Filson
York College
dffilson@skidknick.com

Nancy Orlando
Media Relations Manager, Santander Bank, N.A.
nancy.orlando@santander.us
617.757.5765

To view the original version on PR Newswire, visit:http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/santander-provides-scholarships-to-york-college-students-300114545.html

SOURCE Santander Bank, N.A.

Copyright 2014 PR Newswire. All Rights Reserved
Citizenship fair for immigrants to take place Saturday

By Madina Toure
TimesLedger Newspaper

Elected officials, CUNY Citizenship Now! and the Flushing YMCA will host a free, multilingual citizenship workshop Saturday.

The workshop, which will feature experienced lawyers and immigration professionals from CUNY Citizenship Now!, a university-based legal assistance program that offers citizenship and immigration law services to New Yorkers.

State Sen. Toby Stavisky (D-Flushing), Assemblyman Ron Kim (D-Flushing), City Councilman Peter Koo (D-Flushing) is hosting the fair in partnership with the Flushing YMCA and CUNY Citizenship Now!

The event will be hosted at the basketball court of the Flushing YMCA at 138-46 Northern Blvd. from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Due to limited space, only the first 130 attendees will be served.

Kim said the main appeal of the fair is that it offers free assistance.

“There are so many groups around the community who charge people for this type of service,” he said.

Eligible applicants have to have lived in the United States as a permanent resident for at least five years or three years if they have been living with and are married to the same U.S. citizen.

Applicants also have to have lived in the U.S. for at least half of the three-year or five-year period and be at least 18 years old.

Applicants have to pay a $680 fee to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, but fee waiver assistance is available. Individuals are prohibited from bringing the fee to the fair.

A. Sofia Carreno, communications and college relations specialist for CUNY Citizenship Now!, encouraged residents to come to the fair.

“We would like everyone in the community to come to the event,” Carreno said.

Stavisky said that what makes the fair unique is that residents will be able to benefit from the expertise of the team at Citizenship Now! and the help of the Flushing YMCA.
“Here you have CUNY coming and their attorneys coming to the community,” Stavisky said.

Koo said citizenship offers numerous benefits, including the ability to vote.

“When you are a U.S. citizen, you can vote and when you can vote, you can help your children, grandchildren,” Koo said.

Jen Silvers, executive director of the Flushing YMCA, noted that the YMCA opened the New Americans Welcome Centers to help immigrants achieve literacy and other goals.

She said the Flushing YMCA facilitates citizenship applications every day, year-round.

“We’re just so excited to be part of this event,” Silvers said.

Reach reporter Medina Toure by e-mail at mtoure@cnglocal.com or by phone at (718) 260-4566.

©2015 Community News Group
Shut Down Rikers Island

By NEIL BARSKY  JULY 17, 2015

A CASUAL reader of the news these days might conclude that there is real hope for Rikers Island, New York's cesspool of a jail complex, located swimming distance from La Guardia Airport in the East River.

This month, the city announced an ambitious supervised release program that will offer some defendants alternatives to jail, and earlier this year, the city agreed to end the use of punitive solitary confinement for inmates 21 and younger. The state's top judge wants to reduce the time defendants await their day in court. The United States attorney for the Southern District of New York, Preet Bharara, and Mayor Bill de Blasio's administration have agreed to a series of reforms, including the appointment of a federal monitor and better record-keeping and restrictions on use of force by guards. And the New York City Council is working on a bill to create a bail fund for certain low-level defendants.

Still, one would search in vain for an informed person who believes any of these laudable measures will fundamentally alter life at Rikers. Indeed, recent reports suggest that violence has continued apace on the island even after the surge of press scrutiny and the push for reform. Dramatic change is hard to come by in an institution such as Rikers, with its entrenched unions and government bureaucracies, a hidebound court system and an antiquated physical plant.
If our courts were speedier, our bail system not so rigged against the poor and our mental health and drug rehabilitation programs properly funded, Rikers and other jails might be manageable. Instead, Rikers and big city jails around the country have become notorious dumping grounds for the impoverished, the addicted and the mentally ill.

The reality is that the only way to transform Rikers is to destroy it; it needs to be permanently closed. The buildings are crumbling. The guard culture of prisoner abuse and the gang culture of violence are ingrained. The complex is New York’s Guantánamo Bay: a secluded island, beyond the gaze of watchdogs, where the Constitution is no guide. It is a place that has outlived its usefulness.

Shutting Rikers would be an audacious move for Mr. de Blasio, who would have to find alternatives for the island’s roughly 10,000 overwhelmingly male, African-American and Latino inmates. This may not be as hard as it might seem, though it would probably involve some new or expanded detention facilities in the boroughs, risking not-in-my-backyard blowback.

The mayor would also need to confront a cozy judicial culture that tolerates delays by judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys. He would need the backing of the city’s five district attorneys, the City Council, the state Office of Court Administration and the correction officers union. Most challenging, perhaps, he would need the cooperation, if not the outright support, of his bête noire, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo.

No doubt he would be branded a softy by the tough-on-crime crowd. But the mayor might be pleasantly surprised by the public support for the idea. Over the past year, a wave of revulsion has swept over the city, as horror story after horror story of beatings, suicides and an inmate who was allowed to bake to death have incited genuine public outrage. In conversations with people close to City Hall, former city officials and veteran
criminal justice professionals, I have sensed a growing willingness to explore the "close Rikers" option, and many in the criminal justice community are beginning to think the unthinkable. It would require meaningful research and planning, but I think the mayor would find many allies.

"Given Mayor de Blasio's commitment to reform the city's jail system, it is important to also consider the ultimate reform, closing the largest penal colony in the United States and moving pretrial detainees closer to the courts and to their families," said Michael P. Jacobson, executive director of the CUNY Institute for State and Local Governance, and a correction commissioner under former Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani.

Closing Rikers would reverberate far beyond New York. Criminal justice reform is having a "national moment." For the first time in half a century there appears to be bipartisan support for changes in police practices, drug decriminalization, sentencing and the use of solitary confinement. The closing of the country's most notorious jail would serve as a powerful message that institutions can be held accountable, that government can take new approaches to old problems, and that real change is achievable.

It would also set an example for other cities whose jails have become hotbeds of violence or default mental institutions. It would elevate us in the eyes of the developed world, where our astounding rate of incarceration, our preference for punishment over rehabilitation and our affection for the death penalty make us an outlier.

Finally, rebuilding the 400-acre island would unleash one of the most exciting redevelopment opportunities of a generation. The island could accommodate thousands of housing units, boosting Mayor de Blasio's affordable housing initiative. It could become a park, or a university campus. Some believe it can be part of a much-needed plan to build another runway at La Guardia.

The logistics of closing Rikers would be challenging, but they are not
insurmountable. Shortening average stays would go a long way toward reducing the population. The mayor’s plan to expand supervised release programs would be a substantial achievement. The city has also agreed to find a place to move 16- and 17-year-old prisoners. More than half of the Rikers population is there because they cannot make bail. Eliminating money bail, or at least greatly modifying it, could lead to the release of another large portion of the jail population. Likewise, shifting drug- or alcohol-addicted prisoners to alternative programs such as drug or alcohol rehab, and relocating the seriously mentally ill, could reduce it further. Expanding capacity in borough detention facilities could absorb some of the remaining slots. Finally, the roughly 15 percent of Rikers residents who are sentenced prisoners could be moved to state prisons. This is an admittedly crude analysis, and there will still be a need to build some new facilities in the boroughs, but it demonstrates that the goal is within shooting distance.

The city has several funding options to pay for the transition. It could probably raise hundreds of millions of dollars selling the island to private developers or the Port Authority, which operates La Guardia. The Manhattan district attorney’s office and the City of New York recently received several hundred million dollars each from Wall Street asset forfeiture settlements. What better use of these funds than to contribute to the closing of the city’s most infamous jail complex?

Ultimately, closing Rikers will be a matter of the city’s collective political will and conscience. Interestingly, the city has risen to a comparable challenge in the past. In the 1980s, there was an internationally disreputable neighborhood where crime, drugs and prostitution were rampant, which sprawled over many crowded blocks, and which had successfully repelled years of cleanup efforts. Finally, a mayor and governor who openly detested each other joined forces to clean up the place once and for all. They fought lawsuits, condemned land, assembled properties and successfully transformed the neighborhood. That place was Times Square; the mayor’s
name was Edward I. Koch and the governor was Mario M. Cuomo, the father of the current officeholder. Rikers is inarguably a bigger blot on New York than Times Square ever was, and most everyone will celebrate its demise.

The director of the documentary “Koch” and the chairman and founder of The Marshall Project, a nonprofit journalism organization that covers criminal justice and published this article in collaboration with The New York Times.

A version of this op-ed appears in print on July 19, 2015, on page SR4 of the New York edition with the headline: Shut Down Rikers Island.
What we’re reading today

Good morning, Bright-siders! We have five great education stories to fill up your Friday—and some prompts to encourage you to add your voice to the thriving education community on Medium.

The Web We Need to Give Students

By Audrey Watters in Bright/Medium

“Almost all arguments about student privacy,” argues Watters, “whether those calling for more restrictions or fewer, fail to give students themselves a voice, let alone some assistance in deciding what to share online.” She then explores a program pioneered at the University of Mary Washington that subverts this. Instead of restricting what students can do online, it gives them their own
domain name and the know-how to build a real online presence. It is, according to Watters, a radical act.

What obligation do you think teachers have to give students digital portfolios? How does it square with recent debates about student data privacy?

A Low-Income Brooklyn High School Where 100 Percent of Black Male Students Graduate

By Meredith Kolodner in Hechinger Report

"The secret to [Brooklyn College Academy's] success is not simply which students they pick, administrators say (although they do get to choose—last year 2,800 students applied for 150 seats), but its unrelenting and personalized focus on each individual."

What can other low-income schools learn from Brooklyn College Academy? To what extent are their efforts replicable?

Multiple Intelligences: What Does the Research Say?

In Edutopia

This piece talks about research that could upend the way we think about intelligence and learning. Howard Gardner, the Harvard professor who first proposed the theory, says people have eight types of intelligences, ranging from verbal-linguistic to musical to intrapersonal.

However, the piece makes clear, an aptitude is not the same as the style in which you may like to learn. “Someone with high visual-spatial intelligence, such as a skilled painter, may still benefit from using rhymes to remember information. Learning is fluid and complex, and it’s important to avoid labeling students as one type of learner.”

Does this fit how you think about intelligence and learning? What does this imply for how a school day should be structured?

A New Kind of School Administrator
By Jane Stavem in Medium

“Three years ago, I came to Lincoln Public Schools as the associate superintendent for instruction, after serving as superintendent in a smaller district.... It quickly became very apparent that we needed many people from multiple areas to function as one team. I began working closely with our chief information officer to bring teachers, principals, technology specialists, and district staff into crucial conversations around technology’s role in our district.”

Just another day in the exciting life of a multiple hat-wearing school administrator!

What do you think school administrators need to consider as part of their roles in 2015?

What Happened When I Gave My Students “20% Time”
By Tim Monreal in Bright/Medium

What one teacher learned after mimicking Google in his classroom.

“When Haley presented her game to the class, nothing else mattered. The class was in the zone. Haley beamed with pride. Time stood still. Nobody worried about the report cards sitting on my desk. Nobody was bored. Nobody asked about the future. Nobody asked if this was going to be on the test.”

Educators, would you consider allowing your students to spend a fifth of their classroom time on projects of personal importance to them?
If you’re receiving this letter, chances are you’re interested in *something* having to do with education. To make your Medium experience even more edu-inspiring, you can go here to ‘follow’ education-related tags, check out a few publications to follow here, and always follow your favorite luminaries directly. You can also see what our friendly algorithm suggests and go here. (And if you want to unsubscribe from this letter—no hard feelings!—just click the button below.)

Reach out to me on Twitter (@sarikao08) with any thoughts or questions! Otherwise, catch you on the Bright side.
New Program to Bring T'burg Students into Tech Jobs

By Glynis Hart | Posted: Saturday, July 18, 2015 12:15 am

School lunch prices will rise very slightly in September, and the Trumansburg Central School District, which has shared a food service coordinator with South Seneca Schools for several years, will be changing that to a full time position. New programs and new faces will greet Tburg students on their return to school this fall, including a new Special Education Director, three new pre-K classrooms, and, depending on grant financing, a new technology program.

The school district has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with TST-BOCES (Tompkins Seneca Tioga Board of Cooperative Educational Services) to develop a P-Tech 9-14 educational program. This program would take ninth graders through two years of college with technological training, so that they can graduate with an Associate's Degree and move smoothly into tech jobs; the course incorporates internships in the high school junior year with tech companies. According to the P-TECH website (Pathways in Technology Early College High School) the program is free for students.

TST-BOCES is applying for a grant to develop the P-Tech program here. It was initially developed in 2011 in New York City, as a partnership between high schools and City University of New York, with business partner IBM.

"We would be responsible for managing the finances," explained school business administrator Kimberly Bell. "The program would serve 40 students (in the TST-BOCES area) in school year 2015-16."

In other news from the meeting on July 1, the school board also heard some numbers from the Buildings Condition Survey required every five years by the State Education Department. A thorough assessment of every repair that needs to be done in the middle school — the district's oldest building- by Hunt Architects, estimated $13 million worth of repairs. "The cafeteria is very outdated," said Bell. "A lot of the equipment is old; the dishwasher needs to be replaced, the flooring. A lot of this is equipment; the State doesn't want us to keep it beyond the warranty, but requires it to be replaced. The State requires you to do a BCS so you don't come to them with an emergency."

Some of the repairs or renovations involve enhancing the building to support STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) teaching, such as building labs, adding computers and technological infrastructure. "We're looking at STEM; it goes hand in hand with building updates, but you also have to prioritize," said Bell. "For instance, we want STEM classrooms, but that may not be feasible if you have to replace the boiler."
Another factor in which repairs or updates get done is how much -or whether- State aid is forthcoming. Some items are “aidable,” said Bell, while others are not.

The full document of the Building Condition Survey can be found on the TCSD website. Remember to use the new website (tburgschools.org) rather than the old one (tcasd.k12.ny.us)

In other news, new school board member Michelle Wright, who is also the deputy supervisor for the town of Ulysses, would like to launch a Community Engagement Committee to increase communication between the district and the community. Interested community members can contact her at the town hall.

As the meeting was also the reorganizational meeting, a new president of the school board was elected (Jane Gallagher) and vice president (John White). “Jane expressed her need for someone with experience standing behind her,” said White after the meeting, saying he had full confidence in her abilities. White has served on the school board four terms.

Sarah Vakkas, the special education director, has left the district and her shoes will be filled by Angela Gemignani, who has significant experience and previously served the Newark Valley school district.

Alana Hohwald will be returning to the high school to teach math.