

**From:** Eliza Shapiro [<mailto:elizashapiro@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2015 10:53 AM  
**To:** Mayor's Press Office  
**Subject:** Boys and Girls HS classroom visit

Boys and Girls High School in Bedford-Stuyvesant, 11th grade English class.

Mayor Bill de Blasio (BDB), Chancellor Carmen Fariña, the school's interim principal Michael Wiltshire, and the new Renewal Schools superintendent Aimee Horowitz entered the classroom just before 10:30 a.m.

A large classroom of about 27 students, almost all boys, sit in rows of desks talking about a murder mystery play they are reading, "Trifles" by Susan Glaspell. They are reading Xerox copies of the play. The teacher, Victoria Bozeman, asks them to identify key characters and go over plot developments.

BDB got a round of applause when he entered the classroom, then stood in the front of the classroom with his hands folded and listened to students talk. Bozeman asks how many students watch the show "Empire" - most kids raise their hands. Bozeman points out how the external/internal conflicts of the characters on "Empire" are similar to the conflicts of the characters in "Trifles."

Meanwhile, Fariña walked through the back of the classroom and spoke individually to several students.

After a few minutes, Bozeman asks if BDB wants to speak. He walks to the center of the classroom and asks the students how many of them think the book is interesting. Almost all the kids raise their hands. Then he asks how many of the students relate to elements of the book, very few raise their hands.

He asked the students what they had learned from the book that relates to their own lives, one student, Devaim Fullmore, raised his hand and answered that the book would make him more carefully consider "the females I want to talk to," since the book involves a murder mystery between a married couple. BDB laughed and said, "you are a wise young man."

BDB then said: "in school, you're going to learn a certain amount, you're going to learn a lot more in life."

He added: "we're here today because we believe in this school, we believe in all of you."

He then told the class that education would have a greater role in their economic futures now than ever before. "My only advice...is everything you put into education, it will pay you back."

BDB then asks the students to give Bozeman a round of applause. Before the visit ends, Fariña asks the students to consider -- "since so many of you are boys" -- the differences between women's roles in the 1930s and now. (The play takes place in the '30s.) The group leaves the classroom around 10:40.

NOTE: I'll transcribe BDB's full remarks to the classroom when this presser is over. More about the importance of education, working hard, etc. Expect in an hour or two. I'm at [eliza@capitalnewyork.com](mailto:eliza@capitalnewyork.com) for questions.

And brief context for non-education folks: Boys and Girls is one of the city's longest-struggling schools. It was recently classified by the state as one of the city's two "out of time" schools, i.e. out of time to improve. The school's former principal, Bernard Gassaway, left somewhat dramatically last fall; Fariña appointed Wiltshire as his replacement.

--

Reporter, Capital New York

[917-744-7496](tel:917-744-7496)

@elizashapiro