

From the desk of: Ms. Natalie M. Williams

Anthony Rotunno
Principal
John F. Kennedy High School

October 18, 2005

Mr. Rotunno,

By now you should have received numerous letters from my students. I have typed out the letters that I received copies of below; protecting student surnames and correcting misspellings for clarity.

[Exhibit 1]

“10/14/05

Dear Mr. Rotunno,

This letter is regarding my 6 period class Earth Science room 654 Teacher Ms. Williams. She is a good teacher. We all enjoy her class.

She’s a very good teacher and we’ve learned a lot in this class. She’s the best teacher in the school. She’s really the cream of the crop. Best in the business. Thank you very much.

Sincerely, Laura D. & José G.

[Exhibit 2]

Dear Mr. Rotunno,

Ms. Williams is a good teacher. She has taught me topography; how to read maps and electron orbital shells. She also taught us how salt water affects plants. My fellow classmates and I don’t agree what you are doing to our teacher and we let you know now that you have gotten rid of a lot of good teachers and are about to add Ms. Williams on a good teacher gone list.

Sincerely, one of many of Ms. Williams students”

[Exhibit 3]

“Oct. 14, 2005

Dear Mr. Rotunno,

I don’t think that you should fire Ms. Williams. She is the best science teacher I had. She helps me with whatever I need and always gives us notes and explain what they mean even if the class is rowdy and acting up. I left Ms. Williams class everyday after writing down a page full of notes and tools that I would use everyday after that.

Sincerely, John B.”

[Exhibit 4]

“This is a list to not fire Ms. Williams

1. Laura D. 2. José G. 3. Asael C. 4. Juan A. 5. Jhan M. 6. Donna C. 7. Margarita C. 8. Martha M. 9. Carmen C. 10. John B. 11. Alexander R. 12. Salih A. 13. Erica L. 14. Christian H.”

[Exhibit 5]

“Christian H. 10/14/05

I’ve decided to write this letter because I’ve been informed that Ms. Williams might be fired. I’ve been Ms. Williams student for 2 years. She has gained my respect through doing anything that she can to help her students in any situation they have. Ms. Williams is a teacher that explains all the work she gives to students. Mr. Kent gives us a paper and expects us to figure it out on our own. If Ms. Williams is fired all of my other teachers should be fired also because none reach out to students as she does. I would like to have a teacher of capability as Ms. Williams to pass the regents.”

[Exhibit 6]

“To: Anthony Rotunno (Principal) 10/12/05

I’ve heard that Ms. Williams, my science teacher was going to be removed from the class. I don’t want her to be removed because, I feel she understand me better than the other teacher Mr. Kent. I’ve failed science six times, due to the fact I did not understand the teacher and the work. Ms. Williams was willing to work with me, and I appreciated that. If she was going to be removed which I hope don’t happen, I want to be change to her class.

From the desk of: Ms. Natalie M. Williams

From: her student Sharella D. 2nd period OSIS=251563979 Sophomore”

[Exhibit 7]

“To: The Principal

I don't want Ms. Williams to leave the class, if anything Mr. Kent should leave because, I understand her better. She don't complain when I want her to repeat things. Unlike Mr. Kent. She don't mind working with us let her stay please.

From: Konate B. ID# 207144346”

[Exhibit 8]

“Dear Mr. Rotunno

The students of Living Environment from room 648 request that the teacher Ms. Williams not to be removed from her current 2nd period for we are comfortable as Ms. William as our teacher and wish to end this semester as it is, from yours truly the students of 648.

NAME	I.D.	Date
Edison C.	295137071	10-12-05
José R.	205405970	10/12/05
Keisha R.	203433179	10/12/05
Joanna B.	274142496	10/12/05
Sashira T.	207553215	10/12/05
Gabriel V.	265963439	10/12/05
Annalee M.	251579710	10/12/05
Yinette R.	203527098	10/12/05
Travis D.	263311292	10/12/05
Eliana R.	207855925	10/12/05
Fantanjan	26187757	10/12/05
Konate B.	207144346	10/12/05
Sharella D.	251563979	10/12/05
Carolin C.	255087900	10-12-05
Charles F.	254430788	10-12-05
Samuel W.	255221541	
Kerry V.	256209115	“

[Exhibit 9]

“10/12/05 We the students in Ms. Williams 8th Period class want her to continue as our teacher because we feel that we have benefited so much from only that one marking period and feel that she should continue as our science teacher. Dana Marie N.

Name	ID Number	Senior	Junior	Sophomore	Freshman
Dana Marie N.	255958886			Sophomore	
Austin D.	202905873			Sophomore	
Regina D.	256159260			Senior	
Kelvin D.	291388229			Senior	
Christopher B.	255448904			Sophomore	
Darrin P.	252080155			Sophomore	
Stephanie C.	255475485			Sophomore	
Amanda L.	255614232			Sophomore	
Brooke G.	255712754			Sophomore	
Ellie T.	262890932			Sophomore	
Jeffrey T.	25603216			Sophomore	
Yeriel M.	255509135			Sophomore	
Michael F.	254444334			Sophomore	
Angie S.	255455198			Freshman	
Angel M.	254834278			Sophomore	
Jeremy M.	259472066			Freshman	
Elias M.	254704992			Sophomore	
Alberto S.	270766793			Junior	
Angela E.					
Prisiel A.	204541320			Junior	”

[Exhibit 10]

From the desk of: Ms. Natalie M. Williams

“Bronx, New York 10/14/05

Dear Mr. Rotunno,

We hope that you are ok. We are students of the class SE1A-04 in the room 654, and our teacher is Ms. Williams. She is a good teacher and we are proud for that, the class of Earth Science is very interesting.

Well Mr. Rotunno it's letter is only to that think like appreciate our teacher and a good teacher like is Ms. Williams and we hope that you it proud of her too.

Sincerely, Carmen C. & Martha M.”

[Exhibit 11]

“SUIA-01 Pd. 9 Priscilla B. Sept. 9, 2005

Ms. Williams Anatomy & Physiology Work #2

Hello. My name is Priscilla B. I am a senior in J.F.K. My talents & hobbies are singing, dancing & writing music. I think one of my interest that will serve me well in this class is Ms. Williams is my favorite teacher & has been since my first year in Kennedy. I believe this class will help me in the near future since I want to become a nurse in the future.”

I am touched by the honesty and warmth of my student's letters. It seems that the students believe that I am a good teacher. They also say that they do not want my teaching program changed. Some even state that should my program change, please transfer them into my new class. They have a concern that the principal intends to fire their teacher; and want to express that they feel that Ms. Williams should not be fired. I hope they you will respect the students' wishes and 'grant' their teacher; Ms. Williams, their audience.

I am proud and pleased by my students' strong affection for me and will continue to fight to remain as their teacher. If at all possible; I ask that my classes remain intact with me as their teacher when the science department reconfigures to add more classes.

What exactly; makes a good teacher? The 'opportunity' to team teach with Mr. Kent has brought this matter into stark contrast for me. I had always thought that I was a good teacher and strived to enhance my lessons by creating activities that were both educational and enjoyable for my students. Since I had always taught alone, I had no real basis for comparison. Now, I do... While others may go through the motions and follow policy so that they won't get into 'trouble' with the administration; I strive for greatness.

Given the lack of support and the hostile workplace environment toward teachers that has been created by you, as principal, and by your assistant principle subordinates; it is a wonder that the children manage to get an education at all. Now, the children cry to you. The request is that you should, at least, maintain a teacher who has proven to be an advocate for them. Hear their cries.

It would seem to me that the JFK administration would prefer a teacher who is content with mediocrity. I however, am not. My commitment is to providing my students with the best science education that they can possibly have. Given what I have experienced; the administration's aim is far from that. We have few resources; we lack working microscopes, and we have meager, outdated equipment. The lab specialist has reported to me that the school cannot order new supplies because the Board of Education failed to pay on previous orders. I spend my own personal funds in order to provide necessary materials for science demonstrations, labs and activities. I offer my best. I hope that, as principal of our school, you will too.

Sincerely,

Ms. Natalie Williams

Attachments:

Who's Who Among Americas Teachers Award: Natalie M. Williams 2004-2005
Copies of all referred to student letters [Exhibits 1-11]

From the desk of: [Ms. Natalie M. Williams](#)

Cc

Parent-Teacher Association of John F. Kennedy High School

John F. Kennedy High School Students & their Parents

Mr. Robert Colón, Science Department Coordinator

Mr. Ali Shama, Assistant Principal of Art, Music, Science, Business & Technology

Ms. Diane Stillman; UFT JFK HS Representative

Ms. Lynn Winderbaum; UFT Bronx District Representative

Mr. Joel Klein; Chancellor, NYC Department of Education

Mr. Fernando Ferrar; 2005 NYC Mayoral Candidate

Mr. Michael Bloomberg; Mayor of New York City