

# School closing raises concern in Harlem

By **J. ZAMGBA BROWNE**

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Harlem residents are up in arms with the Central Board of Education over a proposal by the Chancellor to phase out the community's only junior high school.

State Senator David A. Paterson speaking on behalf of the community at a press conference last Monday, vigorously challenged the Chancellor to prove that academic performance at Wadleigh Junior High School is below standards.

Paterson further challenged the Harlem community to take a stand against the Board of Education and Chancellor Nathan Quinones and "let them know that we will not sit idly by while our schools are taken away from us."

The Senator said instead of trying to close Wadleigh, the Chancellor should put in place programs designed to help underachieving students, to prevent dropouts and to prepare "our adolescent students for success in high school and



**DAVID PATERSON**  
college."

Paterson also said that Quinones should develop programs that would bring Wadleigh back to the physical viability for which it was designed to make it habitable for students and learning.

Chancellor Quinones announced last week that he would close Wadleigh because the school is not performing academically, but the principal, Mrs. Shirley Mayo disagrees sharply.

Mrs. Mayo said statistics will prove that Wadleigh's students have improved their academic standings over the

1984-85 term and the school is rated higher than at least one of the three other Junior High Schools in Community District 3.

In addition, Mrs. Mayo said Wadleigh has had a 22 year history of sending inner-city students on scholarship to some of the best preparatory schools in the country who have gone on to become doctors, lawyers, business executives and educators with degrees from leading universities.

She further said students at the school currently participate in a special biomedical program which allow them to use the laboratory at City College, 138th Street and Convent Avenue.

Senator Paterson praised the teachers and staff at Wadleigh whom he said work daily in a school building located at 215 West 114th St. that is in extreme disrepair.

Paterson charged that the Board of Education has long disregarded the need to rehabilitate the structure.

"Many parents are fearful for their children to at-

tend a school in such a condition, but calls for help in upgrading the physical plant from the district, the school and the community have all been ignored by the Board of Education," Paterson declared.

As a Senator who represents the area, Paterson said he is confronted with the problem of over-development on the Upper West Side. He noted that building of luxury high rise housing all over the area will bring a wealthier, demanding population to that community.

But he said two local high schools that serve the Central Harlem community are located on the Upper West Side. One of them, he explained, is Martin Luther King, Jr. on Amsterdam Avenue which is being redesigned into a specialized, twelve month school for a preferred student body.