

Children attending a Bronx elementary school are not receiving the special services to which they are entitled, including Special Education, English as a Second Language, and Academic Intervention Services, according to parents, teachers, and community activists. A coalition that includes Legal Services NYC-Bronx, a program of Legal Services NYC, is demanding action.

An article from the August 8th issue of *El Diario-La Prensa* is translated below. [Read the article in Spanish](#) at *La Diario-La Prensa*'s website.

#### Coalition Reproaches School Principal

Carmen Alarcón/EDLP 2008-08-08 *El Diario NY*

Children attending P.S. 11 Elementary School, at 1257 Ogden Avenue in the Bronx, are not receiving the special services to which they have a right because of inadequate management of funds and inability to lead the institution by Principal Elizabeth Hachar, according to complaints made by a coalition of teachers, parents and Highbridge community activists.

"In a school where 66% of the students are Hispanic, the special programs are of extreme importance for the development of the students," said a teacher who is part of the coalition, who asked to remain anonymous due to fears of reprisal by the principal. On May 2 of this year, the coalition sent an official complaint to the office of District 9 School Superintendent Dolores Desposito in which they describe irregularities that the teachers have observed during the two years that Principal Hachar has held the post. However, to date the coalition has not received a response regarding an investigation, and Principal Hachar continues on in her position.

Among complaints made by the teachers is that students are not receiving services such as Special Education, English as a Second Language (ESL), and Academic Intervention Services. According to Nelson Mar, an attorney at Legal Services NYC-Bronx who specializes in education, both No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) are being violated at P.S. 11.

"Our main objective is to remove the principal and restore Charles Woods as Parent Coordinator," said Mar.

Margie Feinberg, spokeswoman for the Office of Special Investigations (OSI) at the Department of Education would not give a statement except to say that the allegations are being investigated. Principal Hachar did not respond to a phone call from *El Diario-La Prensa*.

"We want to know what Principal Hachar is doing with the school's funds," said Charles Woods, former Parent Coordinator for the school, who says that the handling of the funds is among the coalition's unanswered questions. Hachar came to the school two years ago as part of the Leadership Academy created by the Bloomberg administration, in which school principals are trained according to an enterprise model, according to Woods.

"The model of handling the schools like a business, giving principals the authority to handle funding at their discretion is not healthy," said a P.S. 11 teacher. "What surprises me most is that they have not suspended anyone yet," said George Creek, an activist involved in the complaint.

According to the investigator for OSI, Michael Harris, the people who are under investigation will stay in their positions until the allegations are verified. "People are innocent until proven guilty," Harris explained.

For Griselle Ortiz, mother of a second-grader at P.S. 11, obtaining special services for her son has been frustrating. "I have been going to speak with Principal Hachar about my son's situation, but she has not helped me," said Ortiz. Ortiz's son has hyperactivity problems and the mother complains that the school has not evaluated him so that he can receive the services he needs next year.

"My heart is with the Highbridge community, to see that these children are not receiving the services they need because the principal has not been able to manage the institution in an acceptable way is not right," concluded one of the P.S. 11 teachers who are fighting to remove Principal Hachar from her position.