

# Do the Math: 937,118 students, 1400 buildings: NYC, the nation's biggest school system, Opens September 5th

*Schools could offer third places, like kid-friendly eateries for after-school hangouts, transportation options, foul weather shelters, stores, and landmarks.*

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, September 3, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Of those almost one million students, 69,454 sixth graders are set to step into the unknown, an unfamiliar building in an unfamiliar neighborhood. Nominally, these new middle-schoolers are zoned into neighborhood schools. In a system that boasts about 703 neighborhood elementary school buildings and only 144 middle schools, "neighborhood takes on a more expansive definition. Inside, new teachers, larger classrooms, older kids, outside a new neighborhood to navigate, and for the first time without yellow bus privileges, living more than ½ mile away means a student metro card and a commute on public transportation to and from school: a daunting moment for parents and children.

The DOE tries to ease the transition with its annual Safe Neighborhood Program (this year, October 9th), with maps available for the safest routes for walking, biking, or riding public transportation, and practical matter-of-fact precautions like "Never talking to strangers or accepting rides or gifts from strangers". Website guides advise "add healthy exercise to their daily routines by walking to school," and suggestions to help parents and children adjust to a new school building. But nothing online or in the welcome brochures guides children or their parents on what gives the surrounding neighborhood its character, which is what makes it more than a route, a place of more than anonymous, inimical building fronts to pass quickly through on the way to and from school.

[Walkspan](#) decided to select five top-ranked middle schools, The Anderson School Manhattan; Medgar Evers College Prep/HS Brooklyn; Riverdale/Knightsbridge Academy, Bronx; Louis Pasteur, Queens; and I.S. 34 Staten Island to fill that blank space by assessing and documenting kid-friendly elements in neighborhoods within ¼ and ½ mile radius. Walkspan is the only A.I. neighborhood data-driven search engine primarily designed for real estate that can assess, compare, identify, prioritize aggregate, and score the components that make a neighborhood walkable and even, in kid terms "user friendly".

The Anderson School and Medgar Evers are admissions competitive, accepting children from all five boroughs. According to Walkspan, a good thing is that these two are transit-rich. Walkspan

identified Medgar Evers with 136 bus and subway options within a ½ mile radius. Manhattan 89. The Bronx had 5. Not so Queens and Staten Island. Walkspan found 3 transit options for Staten Island within ½ mile, and 1 in a quarter mile, Queens, nine.

The neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Manhattan surrounding the schools earned Walkspan's highest accolade, a Wow badge for all the factors that make a neighborhood great, including street life, stores, and restaurants. Conversely, the surrounding neighborhood in the Bronx rated a two, and both Staten Island and Queens ranked low with total aggregate scores of 1. On factors that give surrounding neighborhoods their feel, including nature, architecture, sociability, comfort, and quiet, all five schools scored high 3's. Walkspan uses a scale of 1 to 3 where 1 mean Meh and 3 means Wow for neighborhood features and lifestyle essentials availability.

Walkspan did have to broaden its search radius to One mile to find "third places", those "fast-casual" hang-outs between school and home. Surrounding the Anderson school, it discovered 2 McDonald's, a Shake Shack, 17 Starbucks, and 5 Subways. With a preponderance of Mexican and burger offerings, The Anderson School scored second with 43 outlets. Medgar Evans, Brooklyn was highest with 45 sporting 2 McDonalds, 2 Burger Kings, 2 Subways, and 1 Starbucks. The Bronx had choices with 2 McDonalds, 3 subways, a Smash Burger, and a Wendy's for 11. Queens only had 3 but included Five Guys and 2 Starbucks, and Staten Island, without a Starbucks, had 4 Subways and a McDonalds.

According to Bernardita Calinao, Walkspan's founder, Walkspan is a proprietary subscription platform that is not available to the general public. There's an important safety factor in giving children detailed information on neighborhoods they'll pass through. Familiarity encourages being alert and aware of changes in your surroundings. She postulates that without the rich, detailed information that Walkspan offers, an alternative for apprehensive parents could be a real-time, exploratory walkabout. Unfortunately, if the parents are unfamiliar with the neighborhood, they could miss many kid-friendly attributes that engage, intrigue, and ultimately make a child feel a sense of belonging.

Schools could do more by offering short summaries of their surroundings, perhaps including historical information in welcome packets that detail neighborhood highlights, kid-friendly eateries for after-school hangouts, transportation options, foul weather shelters, services like emergency walk-in clinics, kid-friendly stores, and landmarks said Dr. Calinao. Granted, when middle schoolers reach the eighth grade and are ready to move on to high school, the "hood" will be their "turf." Still, information from sources like Walkspan, beginning when they enter, gives power and autonomy, and an alert, curious, eager student, attentive and vested in the neighborhood looking forward to the walk to and from school!

To encourage schools to promote neighborhood walkability and accessibility, Walkspan is offering to open their platform for a limited period from September 5 to October 1 at no charge to the first twenty middle school principals who would like to research their neighborhoods and email Walkspan using their school email addresses and provide their school I.D.

Bernardita Calinao

Walkspan

+1 914-419-0667

info@walkspan.com

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/739970191>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2024 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.