

BY: Senator KAPLAN

CONGRATULATING Superintendent Al Harper upon the occasion of his retirement after 25 years of distinguished service as an educator

WHEREAS, It is the practice of this Legislative Body to take note of and publicly acknowledge individuals of remarkable integrity and character whose endeavors have enhanced the quality of education in this great State; and

WHEREAS, The result of many individual efforts, the excellence and the success of Elmont School District is due in large part to the efforts of Al Harper; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to congratulate Superintendent Al Harper upon the occasion of his retirement after 25 years of distinguished service as an educator; and

WHEREAS, For more than two decades, Al Harper has been a true fixture in Elmont, New York, serving as an Assistant Principal and Principal at Elmont Memorial High School before becoming the Elmont School District Superintendent in 2005; he will officially retire from this esteemed position at the end of the 2019-20 school year; and

WHEREAS, Raised in Queens, New York, Al Harper received a Bachelor's degree in Communication from Howard University in 1981; he went on to earn a Master's degree in Special Education from Adelphi University in 1993, and a professional certification in Administrative Supervision from the City University of New York Graduate Center in 1994; and

WHEREAS, Al Harper began his illustrious career in education as a middle school and special education teacher in New York City; he eventually became both a grade and special education Dean in the district, and worked to train new teachers, coordinate multicultural programs and establish procedures for expanding the collection of student data; and

WHEREAS, In addition, he helped implement Project Reach, a program which empowers teenagers to strategize ways to address discrimination and injustice; and

WHEREAS, In 1995, Al Harper joined the Sewanhaka Central High School District as an Assistant Principal at Elmont Memorial High School, where he served on the Sewanhaka District Safety Committee, organized the school's discipline plans, coordinated in-school suspension and supervised the Saturday Detention program; and

WHEREAS, Al Harper was named Principal of Elmont Memorial High in 2002, during which time he was responsible for the management and instruction of nearly 2,000 students; under his able leadership, the school received several accolades including recognition by the College

Board in 2004; and

WHEREAS, Continuing a trend toward excellence, Al Harper became the Elmont District Superintendent in 2005, building on his experiences at the middle and high school levels; he expanded enrichment programs to all students in grades three through six and, seeing how successful the high school's Model United Nations Club was, implemented a similar program for the elementary school students; and

WHEREAS, During Al Harper's extraordinary tenure as Superintendent, 87 percent of his students were listed as proficient on the English Language Arts exam, up from 50 percent in the 1998-99 school year, and approximately 95 percent of students were proficient in mathematics, up from 70 percent; and

WHEREAS, With a steadfast and unwavering commitment to his community, Al Harper spearheaded the Elmont Dads Club, which engages fathers and their children in community service activities, and started a Thanksgiving Food Drive; he also forged strong relationships with officials at Gateway Youth Outreach, Belmont Park and the local fire department; and

WHEREAS, A caring, competent and committed leader, Al Harper's character and integrity are the hallmarks of his life and work as an educator, a community volunteer and as a person; and

WHEREAS, The Elmont community is indeed fortunate and blessed to have had such a dedicated and respected educational leader; his wisdom and contributions reached into every classroom, truly making a difference in the lives of those lucky enough to have worked with him; and

WHEREAS, A significant contributor to education in New York State, Al Harper has continually demonstrated an impressive dedication, an unparalleled devotion and an unrelenting enthusiasm for the quality of the educational programs and opportunities offered at the Elmont School District for the benefit of its faculty and students, as well as for the entire community; and

WHEREAS, In completing his service as Superintendent, Al Harper leaves behind more than mere bricks and mortar; he leaves behind a legacy to the students of Elmont School District and to the residents of the Elmont community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Superintendent Al Harper upon the occasion of his retirement, and to wish him continued success in all his future endeavors; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Superintendent Al Harper.