

**NEWS FROM**

**STATEN ISLAND COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**BOROUGH'S FIRST K-8 CHARTER SCHOOL  
WELL PREPARED FOR OPENING DAY**

Monday, September 13 was the first day of the first school year at Staten Island Community Charter School, the first K-8 charter school in the borough. Based on demand within the community, the school opened with three kindergarten classes and one first-grade class, a total enrollment of 100 young Staten Islanders.

Opening day was a first for Principal Pauline Frank of Arden Heights as well. A veteran teacher and highly regarded elementary school principal, Mrs. Frank said she was used to the neighborhood schools of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, where most children walk to school.

At SICCS, the majority of currently enrolled students ride the bus to and from school. That's a total of five school buses, picking up and delivering 80-odd very young children at one of the busiest intersections in the borough. Quite a challenge to meet, for the very first time on the very first day in operation of a brand-new school.

**How did Mrs. Frank and her team manage it? They had a plan.**

"The key word was 'focus,' " said Mrs. Frank. "Don't let yourself become

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distracted. Keep your focus on the children—are they all here? Are they positioned safely on the sidewalk? Is your route to the building clear?"

Despite exhaust-belching buses, fire engine sirens and the normal chaos of rush-hour traffic at the Beach Street/St. Paul's Avenue/Cebra Avenue intersection—one of the borough's busiest—the plan worked. Beautifully. Not that there weren't snafus; there were. But they were the kinds of snafus you'd expect on the first day of any new undertaking.

There were mix-ups because some parents drove their children to school rather than have them take the bus, as had been arranged. Some parents had additional paperwork to complete in the office. The children's first meal of the day was delivered late. But the principal, her teaching staff, and Chief of Operations and Finance Osiris Stephen and Office Manager Maritza Castillo kept the flow flowing.

By 9 a.m., the children were having breakfast in their colorful new classrooms, after which they worked in groups large and small, seated at tables, gathered on a rug, introducing themselves to each other.

According to Principal Pauline Frank, the day went more smoothly than she and her staff had anticipated. A large part of the reason was, they were prepared.

"There was only one child who was in the wrong school," she recalled, "and only one who really wasn't ready for a full day away from home. There was also a little confusion about drop-off locations at the end of the day," she added, "but really, it all went pretty smoothly."

The lesson of opening day? *Be prepared.*

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