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**DREAM OPENS DAVID ADJAYE-DESIGNED PRE-K-12 CHARTER SCHOOL
IN SOUTH BRONX**

DREAM Charter Schools transforms a long-dormant storage warehouse along the Harlem River into a world-class education facility for 1,300 students designed by a globally-renowned architect

(MOTT HAVEN) January 19, 2023 – DREAM, a 31-year-old public charter school network and community-based youth development organization that operates in East Harlem and the Bronx, today opened a new Pre-K-12 school site at [20 Bruckner Boulevard](#) along the Harlem River in the South Bronx’s Mott Haven neighborhood. The new school, designed by world-renowned architect Sir David Adjaye, will serve 1,300 students starting in Pre-K through 12th grade and offer post-secondary services on-site to a growing alumni community. The 120-year-old, 200,000-square-foot brick building, which has sat vacant for four decades, was originally used as an ice manufacturing and storage facility by Colonel Jacob Ruppert – former owner of the Yankees and developer of the first Yankee Stadium – to support his brewery in Manhattan.

“We like to dream big, and it’s hard to imagine dreaming much bigger than 20 Bruckner,” said [Richard Berlin](#), **DREAM co-Chief Executive Officer**. “After all, an investment in a school is an investment in every child who will ever walk through its doors. And when we invest in all our kids as early and deeply as possible—the same way we invest in kids from our most affluent neighborhoods—that’s when we make transformative, generational change.”

“20 Bruckner is a physical manifestation of our students’ hopes and dreams for themselves—a place that finally matches up to what our kids deserve and dream,” said [Eve Colavito](#), **DREAM co-Chief Executive Officer**. “It represents a community that comes together to support them in exercising their agency and power in the world, on a long-term continuum from pre-k to postsecondary. It’s a place where families can access everything they need—not just during the school day, but after school and through the summer. Not just until they graduate, but for the rest of their lives. That’s the DREAM difference.”

“The new DREAM Charter School at 20 Bruckner is an incredible opportunity to do something that all cities should be doing, which is radically reuse its industrial heritage or its past, and not to tear down buildings but to reimagine them as new pieces of infrastructure for new generations,” said [Sir David Adjaye](#). “We took this project on because our mission aligned with DREAM and we were deeply inspired by their approach to education and community building.”

The six-story facility combines DREAM Mott Haven Elementary and Middle Schools and DREAM Charter High School under one roof and includes a state-of-the-art gym with a regulation-size basketball court; a cathedral-style, light-filled library space; STEAM quad featuring specialty classrooms and laboratories; double-height arts wing with built spatial

flexibility; and a rooftop that will function as an outdoor classroom, play space, and garden. In addition, the building has two dining halls and a fully equipped kitchen that will support a scratch-cooking meal program beginning in the 2023-24 school year. Bronx graffiti legends Tats Cru have created a large-scale mural on the third floor depicting DREAM's organizational history, with more local artists to be confirmed for building-wide art activations. Multiple classrooms and other shared spaces feature sweeping views of the Harlem River and the Manhattan skyline.

The design of the new building embraces its original industrial roots, with exposed steelwork, red brick, barrel-vaulted ceilings, and large arched windows, while also incorporating innovative design features to rethink the space for students. For example, each floor is broken up by two strategically positioned glass columns that run from the base of the building to the roof, known as "lightwells," on the north and south sides. These transparent multi-floor glass corridors introduce natural light throughout the building and provide visual connections between classrooms. Real estate consulting firm DBI Projects represented DREAM from the project's inception, translating the school's goals into a clear vision for the facility and developing a strategy to implement it alongside Adjaye Associates.

The new school building at 20 Bruckner is an ideal location to apply DREAM's unique Grow the Whole Child education model, powered by four distinct yet interconnected elements that drive transformative change for youth: rigorous academics; social-emotional learning; a deep commitment to family and community engagement; and a belief in the foundational importance of physical and mental health & wellness. Every classroom is designed to accommodate two teachers in line with DREAM's co-teaching approach, in addition to offering built-in learning spaces throughout common areas for individualized instruction. The building will also serve as the primary hub for post-secondary services designed to support DREAM alumni, called Legends, after they graduate, with college and career mentorship offices on the ground floor.

DREAM traces its beginnings to 1991, when a group of volunteers transformed an abandoned lot in East Harlem into two baseball diamonds for the neighborhood youth. That effort grew into Harlem RBI, an award-winning sports-based youth development organization that offered afterschool and summer programming, becoming a model and symbol of the power of play for young people everywhere. The desire to address the failings of education and public policy that were impacting the long-term outcomes of Harlem RBI youth led the organization to evolve into the DREAM of today: a public charter school network in East Harlem and the South Bronx defined by its extended-day, extended-year school model and ongoing community youth development programs. Many neighborhood kids who once played baseball on the East Harlem field now send their own children to DREAM's schools and serve as DREAM's teachers, administrators, and board members.

Today, DREAM's network of six schools serve more than 2,000 children, 99 percent of which are students of color; 88 percent of which qualify for free or reduced lunch; and 29 percent of which have identified special needs (compared to NYC average of 20 percent). Nearly half of DREAM alumni are first-generation college students, and DREAM Charter High School has a 99 percent

acceptance rate of students into college. Despite the traumatic learning loss for students across the country due to the pandemic, in the 2021-22 school year DREAM Charter Schools K-2 students outperformed 95% of schools in the Charter School Growth Fund's national portfolio of over 150 charter organizations; and Grades 3-8 students made gains that outpaced their peers in NYC and NYS public schools, with grades 6-8 increasing their percent proficiency from 2021 by 13% in ELA and +25% in Math.

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ABOUT DREAM

Originally founded as Harlem RBI, DREAM traces its beginnings to 1991, when a group of volunteers transformed an abandoned, garbage-strewn lot into two baseball diamonds for the youth of East Harlem. More than 30 years later, the organization serves thousands of children across East Harlem and the South Bronx through a network of free, extended-day, extended-year DREAM Charter Schools and community sports-based youth development programs. By developing a whole child model that is responsive to the unique academic and social needs of every child, DREAM is creating a future where all children are equipped to fulfill their vision of success. For more information on DREAM and its mission, visit www.wearedream.org.

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