

Kim Watkins

Kim is a public school parent and President of District 3's Community Education Council (CEC3). Kim has built a reputation around her commitment to justice and progress for public schools in Harlem and the Upper West Side. She led the 2015 Upper West Side rezoning and experienced first hand, the absurdity of political influence over community need. Kim has also run two successful companies and a national nonprofit. She understands the struggles of working parents: raising a family, living paycheck to paycheck, running a small business while volunteering to improve the community. She believes in the power of the Borough President's role as a catalyst for structural changes that will help move Manhattan forward by rooting out injustices and corruption.

Kim also believes that New York City's 2021 local elections represent a unique opportunity to offer families, essential workers, and vulnerable New Yorkers, a new kind of leadership! Government hasn't been working for many years; local politicians have passed laws, enacted policies and made decisions that favor the wealthy and well connected. Across all issues: public schools, affordable housing, economic development, structural racism, and quality of life concerns, elected officials have listened to the loudest voices for too long. Most New Yorkers are worse off than they were eight years ago; our needs are not being met. The pandemic magnified this problem, and we are all paying the price. With the stakes as high as they are coming out of COVID19 next year, we need to elect people who can make progress that regular people can see and feel.

Kim's platform is based around schools, jobs, and homes, along with the ways that they are connected to one another: racism and gender bias, poor fiscal oversight, safety and civic literacy, and lack of political courage. Here are her top priorities:

1. **Give Public Schools Back to the Public.** We need common sense checks and balances, more decision making authority in communities, and budget transparency. And we need to end the Mayor's sole control over the public school system.
2. **Fast Track the Economic Recovery!** Work with business and community leaders to bring start ups, pop-ups, retail, dining and tourism back to NYC with a special focus paid to childcare and other needs of workers.
3. **Fight for Housing Equity!** Housing policy must meet the needs of our essential workers and the reality of wages and living costs. We must help our homeless with permanent homes, and we must increase home ownership, especially among Black and Latinx residents.
4. **Launch a 2030 Green Manhattan Plan!** We must reduce vehicular street usage by 20%, increase multi-modal transportation initiatives, add green space, rainwater runoff, and develop long-range climate initiatives.
5. **Lead the Budget Justice** battle with a more public process and greater accountability for decision makers.
6. **Champion Government Responsibility** that makes the most of community engagement, technology, and a commitment to the needs of regular New Yorkers.

Although Kim grew up in Tidewater, Virginia, she moved to New York after college and has spent the majority of her adult life in Upper Manhattan. She found her way to Manhattanville in the late 1990's, and served as an Auxiliary Police Officer in the 24 pct. She, her husband, Brian, and daughter, Harper moved to Harlem in 2010, where they currently live with their two cats and a puppy! She also serves on her HDFC building's board.