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## BACK-TO-SCHOOL

# Some charter schools in private space restarted classes today

Posted By [Geoff Decker](#) On November 2, 2012 @ 3:45 pm In [Newsroom](#) | [No Comments](#)

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Students and teachers arrived at Brooklyn Prospect Charter School in Windsor Terrace early this morning for their first day back since Hurricane Sandy.

Not all city schools lost a full week of classes because of Hurricane Sandy.

Because of storm damage to hundreds of city school buildings, students who attend school in one of the Department of Education's buildings were told to stay home this week and not return until Monday at the earliest. But in privately owned buildings, some charter schools were up and running today with regularly scheduled classes, tutoring, and college prep courses.

At Brooklyn Prospect Charter School in Windsor Terrace, which was relatively unscathed by Hurricane Sandy, school resumed Friday and settled back into an almost regular schedule.

Classes started later than normal and teachers planned to assign students classwork related to the ongoing crisis that hundreds of thousands of residents are dealing with in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. But Executive Director Daniel Rubenstein said he wanted to open the school as soon as possible to restore a sense of normalcy.

"After a time of trauma, what students need is to get back to routines," Rubenstein said.

Many students at the District 15 school live in Red Hook, the riverfront neighborhood where some residents are still without electricity and some residents are still bailing water out of their

basements. But Rubenstein said none of his students or their families experienced severe upheaval.

Attendance — 80 percent — was lower than average, but Rubenstein said about 90 percent of his staff was able to get to school.

“We thought some of our teachers weren’t going to make it and it looks like almost all of them are here,” said Penny Marzulli, the school’s deputy executive director.

It’s unclear how many of the roughly 64 charter schools operating in private space are back up and running full time. Chancellor Dennis Walcott said on Thursday that scheduling decisions would be up to the privately managed schools as long as they did not depend on the Department of Education for space.

Some charter schools, including all 12 of the schools in the Success Academy Charter Schools network, canceled the entire week of school before the city made the same decision. And other charter school leaders, including New Heights Academy Executive Director Stacy Winitt, said they were following the city’s lead. Winitt said teachers returned today to her school in Washington Heights and students would return on Monday.

But other charter schools are taking advantage of the flexibility of operating in their own space. Some students were back at Democracy Prep High School on Thursday for personal tutoring, and Superintendent Seth Andrew said seniors were attending SAT courses today.

“Charter schools have the ability to turn on a dime more easily,” Marzulli said. “It allows us to move more easily to best serve our students.”

The flexibility is more limited for schools operating in public school buildings. The schools are closed to students this week and Walcott said co-located charter schools would have to follow the same instructions as their district counterparts.

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