

April 26, 1955

Dr. Edward Bernath
Board of Education
110 Livingston Street
Brooklyn, New York

Dear Ed:

I hear nothing but good about the tenacious and intelligent way that you are solving some of the problems that are coming before you. Stick to it on that Wagner houses proposition. There are any number of reasons, all of them important and all of them sensible - we shouldn't turn over that property or buildings to the Park Commissioner.

I am terribly unhappy about the departure of Nancy. Workers with wit and wisdom are rare. She had both! She had a great many things to contribute to the program - all grace notes - but lovely ones. She was so pleased that you took her to lunch.

Now for the matter of John Rhodes. He is going to be a great sculptor one of these days. He is an able man now. The State Department has made him an offer to take some of his own work and some material that he wants and can get together in pictures and slides for lecturing in foreign countries. Could we kill two birds with one stone? Could you suggest to Brennan that you would like a worthwhile representation of all the work done by the Bureau of Community Education? You, undoubtedly, know how wide in range and subject the work of the Bureau is, and I am convinced that it could be a "spectacular" if you could get Brennan to commission John to do that job. He would accumulate material not only of permanent value to the Board of Education but it could be part of the educational job he will do if he goes abroad for the State Department.

As part of his exhibit, he will want to make slides of sculptures at work in America, but the important idea to advance in other countries, is the fact that opportunity to express one's self in the arts is open to all Americans through our public school system, elementary and adult education, and recreation programs. I see as part of this exhibit, the work done at all ages in all the crafts. The old idea of art for the few and art for the museum is a dead duck. The influence of the artist on the public made sensitive to color, design and form is important. If I were to suggest this to Frank or Rhodes were to suggest it, it wouldn't be good. Frank has to believe that the idea is his. Don't you want to plant it in his head? I hope you do!

Drop me a note. Good luck to you!

Sincerely,