

MEDIA RELATIONS & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

THE CHALLENGE

David Banks is a longtime client of The TASC Group. Our firm helped him launch the Eagle Academy for Young Men Schools in New York City, which is a groundbreaking all-boys public education initiative created to address low graduation rates among Black and brown students in New York City's public school system. As a result of his leadership and success, David Banks was appointed chancellor of the New York City Public School System, the largest school district in the nation, serving 1.2 million students. While he was chancellor, TASC represented David, helping him promote his administration's educational initiatives and build a national reputation as one of the country's leaders in education policy.

During his tenure, incidents of antisemitism began spreading on college campuses and in schools nationwide, including New York City. One high-profile incident occurred when a Jewish teacher was verbally and physically intimidated at a city high school, forcing her to leave the school. The event sparked national headlines and drew attention to growing tensions around antisemitism in public education.

In Washington, D.C., Congresswoman Elise Stefanik led congressional hearings investigating antisemitism on school campuses, during which she questioned the presidents of Harvard and University of Pennsylvania, both of whom later resigned after their testimonies were widely criticized. In the weeks following those hearings, Congresswoman Stefanik subpoenaed Chancellor Banks to testify before her committee regarding antisemitism in the nation's largest school system.

THE STRATEGY

The TASC Group immediately created a strategic plan to prepare, develop and train Chancellor Banks, positioning him for success at this high-stakes congressional hearing.

We conducted extensive research on previous hearings, including reviewing testimonies from Harvard's and UPenn's leadership and identifying their key missteps. TASC prepared detailed Q&A memos and scenario briefings, helping Chancellor Banks anticipate difficult questions and refine his responses. Our strategy was to ensure he delivered strong, assertive testimony that demonstrated both command of the issue and moral leadership.

Before the hearing, TASC helped organize and promote a press conference in New York City, during which Chancellor Banks met with Jewish and rabbinical leaders to reaffirm his commitment to protecting Jewish students and teachers across the city's schools. He also engaged with Muslim and Palestinian community leaders and imams to reaffirm his commitment to combating Islamophobia in public schools. For both communities, the chancellor's goal was to foster dialogue and unity during a time of heightened tension.

TASC helped Chancellor Banks craft, write and place an op-ed in the Jewish Forward outlining his comprehensive strategy to combat antisemitism while promoting inclusion and understanding. In the piece, Chancellor Banks wrote, "When hate rears its head in our schools, whether it's Islamophobia, antisemitism or any other form of bigotry, we will respond." The op-ed reflected his balanced and proactive approach to addressing all forms of hate within the school system.

When Chancellor Banks appeared before Congress, he presented a clear, deliberate plan of action to combat antisemitism while ensuring that the voices of Jewish and Palestinian students were respected and protected. His preparation with TASC allowed him to provide thoughtful, assertive and authentic responses under intense questioning, distinguishing him from other nationally well-known higher education leaders who had struggled in similar hearings.

THE RESULTS

Chancellor Banks's congressional testimony was widely applauded as one of the strongest and most composed performances during a highly charged national debate. He was praised for his clarity, confidence, leadership and his ability to navigate a politically sensitive environment with poise.

Media coverage following the hearing was overwhelmingly positive. [The New York Times](#) wrote, "... But Mr. Banks turned it [the congressional testimony] into a moment of his own — taking an unyielding, fiery tone, denying accusations that his district had responded poorly to hateful incidents and, at times, unapologetically speaking over and pushing back against members of Congress." The chancellor was featured and commended across dozens of other major national outlets, including [CBS-TV](#), [The Washington Post](#), [The New York Daily News](#), NBC, CNN and MSNBC. His handling of the issue stood in stark contrast to other university leaders who faced criticism for their responses.

The Jewish Forward highlighted his op-ed and forceful public stance as a model of how education leaders can effectively address hate and intolerance in schools. His leadership was viewed as both morally grounded and pragmatically effective in addressing one of the most complex and divisive issues in American education.

Through The TASC Group's strategic media preparation, message development and relationship-building with key community and faith leaders, Chancellor Banks not only avoided reputational damage, but emerged as a respected national voice for unity, safety and inclusion in public education.

8M+ MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

The New York Times

CNN

The Washington Post

PBSO
NEWS
HOUR

MSNBC
Forward



CBS MORNINGS

TIME