

Community District Education Council District 26

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MINUTES OF BUSINESS & CALENDAR PUBLIC MEETINGS

Date: Thursday, October 27, 2005

Time: Business Meeting, 7:00 P.M.; Calendar Meeting, 8:00 P.M.

Location: MS 74, 61-15 Oceania Street, Bayside, NY 11364-Room 128

The meeting of the Community District Education Council of District 26 (CDEC26) was called to order and chaired by Rob Caloras, President at 7:05 p.m.

Roll Call: Rob Caloras, Carol Gomez, Susan Shiroma, Mona Fabricant, Richard Olson, Jackie Montgomery, Melissa Dorfman, Shakira Gafar-Kirshnitz, Edward Fallacaro & Admit Amit the new student member.

Late: Bona Sun

Excused: Yen Shia Chou

Anita Saunders, Community Superintendent; Lori Stein-Butera, Parent Support Officer & Walter O'Brien also attended.

Recording Secretary's Report – Carol Gomez

1. *Reviewing of previous month's minutes* (September 29, 2005) – Carol asked if there were any corrections, changes, or additions. Mona made a motion to accept the minutes, Rob seconded and council members voted unanimously to accept.
2. *Letter from Ms. Andre Dapolitio – thanking the CDEC for making space for Mr. Ghosh who is handling the after school program.*
3. *Letter from Patrick & Virginia Patten - they are parents of a student in 178 - expressing their opinion regarding Special Ed children.*
4. *Invitation from PS 191 inviting everyone to attend their International Culture Day on Nov. 10th at 9 a.m.*

President's Report

1. Rob started off by welcoming Shakira to the CDEC Council.
2. Spoke about correspondence received & forwarded to the council members. Stated that some of the articles will be available on the website
3. Reiterated about projects that are being done in Dist. 26. Have not received any correspondence from the School Construction Authority (SCA) so a letter was sent to the Chancellor on October 20th & no response, so another letter was sent October 27th and the response was that he would get some information by the end of the day. Hopefully a visit from Mr. Goldstein will be soon.
4. Sent inquiry to Chief of Staff in Assemblyman Weprin's office regarding NCLB funding from the federal government for the tests. Response was that the State gets some money. Correction will be sent to the newspapers. There is no federal money for the schools that receive the NCLB transfers, it is only Title 1 money that stays with the school so if the child leaves the school no money leaves with that child.

5. Attended meeting October 21st on the campus at Queens College. It was a Marsha Tom Production. Lori Butera was one of the organizers also. Program emphasized the “positive” and stated that the BOE is moving forward. Well attended by PTA and Parent Coordinators.
Carmen Farina spoke about the DOE moving forward & doing for the children. She focused on overcoming the idea that there are good schools and bad schools. There were initiatives such as lessening the gap between male & females. Focus on getting the males interested in academics. Emphasized on getting the school system to change to accommodate single parents (more night meetings & parent involvement).
Rob felt there was no discussion of the positive changes that parents have brought about in changing the DOE policies. (Ex. – report card policy)
6. Campaign for Fiscal Equity. Courts will not let the legislators pay the schools and will go forth.
7. Trying to reach out to elected officials – arranging meetings – officials wants the CDEC to become advocates for the children.
8. Monthly issues sent to Anita Saunders & response sent to the members.
9. Spoke about tutoring & urged the council to find a school and help out.

The following is a list of issues that members of the CDEC have expressed concern. Ms. Anita Saunders has taken the time to respond:

1. PS 178 - Conversion to K-8

- A. What assurances can be given that funding will be available to create a full service middle school program? For example, creating a science lab, construction of additional bathrooms & larger desks.
Funding is based upon student enrollment. Next year there will be funding for the sixth grade class based enrollment. The following year, there would be money for the 7th grade class and 6th grade class based upon student enrollment. Funding will be requested to upgrade the existing science lab and provide larger desks for 6th graders. There will be no construction of new bathrooms;
- B. How can the existing facility handle the additional students for classrooms, lunch breaks and assembly programs? What has been done at schools that have already undergone this conversion?
Initially, with only a sixth grade added the first year, the additional space requirements might not require too many adaptations. For instance, existing lunch periods may accommodate the sixth graders. However, if the number of additional students requires change, an additional lunch period will have to be added. Also, as is the case in many schools, assembly programs are scheduled for different grades depending on the topics.
- C. What assurances can be given that the space needs for grades 6-8 will not cause other grades to lose classes and increase class student sizes?
Since PS 178 is currently down about 200 students, it is unlikely that creating the 6-8 classes will have a deleterious impact upon K-5 classes.
- D. Can you give specifics as to how the option to stay at PS 178 or attend Ryan would work? How has such option been effectuated at other schools that have converted?
The students are and will remain zoned for PS 216. They will have the option to attend PS 178 for grade 6-8. Since MS 216 is zoned middle school, a student attending PS 178 in 6th grade may attend MS 216 for 7th grade, if parents so desire.
- E. How will parents/guardians be notified of this option regarding middle schools?
Through the usual system of notice; SLT, PTA, Principal and Parent Coordinator. This month's PTA 178 newsletter has an extensive discussion on the transition and discusses this option.
- F. Is there going to be a timetable for the transition that parents/guardians can review, prior to a final determination? What assurances can be given that sufficient time has been given for fulfilling all representations made regarding the transition to a K-8?
Once SLT votes and meetings are conducted, parents/guardians will then get the option to send children to 178 for grades 6-8 or attend their locally zoned middle school 216.

G. What happens if the number of PS 178 students choosing to remain at PS 178 for 6-8 is not enough to fill seats? Would available seats in grades 6-8 be filled through variances and/or NCLB transfers?

It seems that seats will be filled for the sixth grade (based upon initial responses to proposal). No variances will be given. However, there can be no guarantees that available seats will not be filled through NCLB transfers. Note the school is currently only 78% utilized and, as such, is very vulnerable to transfers.

H. Would teachers hired for grades 6-8 be certified in their subject area? Is it possible that, due to limited class sizes, a teacher could be shared with another school?

Teachers would be hired for sixth grade with the appropriate certification and it is unlikely that any sharing of teachers will take place. Teachers of grade 7-8 would be hired according to subject area license.

I. Would the Special Education program remain at 178 after transition to a K-8?

The program would continue until current students graduate out. Currently, only one child in the program is zoned for 178. It is likely that a collaborative teaching program will be established; special education students are placed in general education classes and an extra teacher is assigned to that class. This teacher is not limited to teaching the special education students and class sizes tend to be smaller in this program.

J. Would the Pre-K program remain at 178 after transition to a K-8?

This program could remain at the school if space is available, however, preliminary review and assessment suggests this is unlikely. Please note that Pre-K is not mandated and it can be located at a different school.

K. What other schools in D26 are being considered for transition to K-8?

None. However, several Elementary School Principals are considering this option to deal with declining enrollments.

L. Can a representative from the School Construction Authority and the DOE come to a meeting and fully explain what is involved in such a transition? Would you be so kind as to make such arrangements for our November meeting?

Not sure if it is a School Construction Authority. Will try to get person who did walk through of 178 to determine if its facilities can handle transition. Other people involved with K-8 transition and the Middle School initiative will be sought for our November meeting.

2. PS/IS 266 - Enrollment

A. Are there class sizes at 266 that are in need of students? Is there any effort being made to add students to 266?

266 need students and the waiting list is being reviewed to fill these seats.

B. If 266 is in need of students, or is simply trying to add students, how are they allowed to increase the student population? Is there a school waiting list?

There is a waiting list and most of the students on this list come from the southeast section of the District.

C. Given problems other schools have had in losing more than anticipated students to 266, what assurances can be given that such depletion is not allowed to occur again?

There will be no depletion of any school's students to fill 266 seats. The waiting list is being reviewed to prevent students leaving classes that already have low registrations.

D. What assurances can be given that any school that loses a student to 266, whether by lottery selection or waiting list, will not be forced to lose a class or necessary fund levels to maintain programs that are already in place?

It will not happen. The classes children are coming from will be checked for registration as well as the school.

E. Would Mr. Morris be willing to attend a future meeting to discuss issues regarding student enrollment at his school?

Can ask him.

3. Science Curriculum

A. Which grades receive a specific science program?

All grades are taught the Scope and Sequence Program. This is available for review on the DOE web site-takes a bit of patience to get to, but worth the effort.

B. Has District 26 received any additional money this year for science programs? No.

C. What efforts are being made improve students' attitude toward science?

Classes are emphasizing hands on projects to get kids interested in science. Programs such as Urban Advantage, APEC, Jamaica Wildlife, are available for no charge.

D. Are collaborations with local institutions (e.g. NY Hall of Science, Queens Farm Museum, Bronx Zoo, NY Historical Society, Museum of Natural History, Metropolitan Museum of Art, MOMA, Cold Spring Harbor Research Laboratory, NY Academy of Medicine, etc) being forged that can bring everyday science to students? Are such collaborations created at the district or school?

There are programs and there is a great effort to create collaborations with institutions for mentor programs and other types of partnerships.

E. Have programs available on the Internet been utilized as part of the curriculum? (e.g. Kids Connection, which is available at www.sciencefriday.com/kids, is specifically designed to be a part of the Middle School Science program.) Unsure

F. Given the importance of creating an interest in science early on, are the requirements for certification as a science teacher in elementary school sufficient?

Possibility of creating a special science certificate that requires extra science credits for teachers to teach science to elementary students. There is a Citywide Task Force made up of prominent members of the Science community seeking to improve Science teaching. The Region does have an elementary and middle school Science Coordinator who is assigned to our schools to promote science education.

Treasurer's Report

1. Ed stated that there was no change in the budget from last month.
2. Forecasting – website costs

Committee Reports

Rob stated that there was no official Chairs for either committee (Zoning & Outreach) and asked if anyone has done anything or had any contacts with the PTAs'. Susan spoke about her activities (see attachment). Rob spoke his activities also.

Carol asked about contact with PTA President/Principal – Rob informed the council in the procedure. Jackie stated that she sent e-mails to her contacts to introduce herself and suggest that everyone make some kind of contact with your liaisons.

Ed suggested that each member should share their visits with the council members to see if some of the issues are the same at each school and start to work on it and get feedback before the next meeting.

Rob asked for a volunteer for the Zoning & Outreach committee, Ed volunteered to be the Chair. Suggest having a monthly meeting to discuss issues. Anita clarified that the CDEC is not there for fact finding or monitoring, the CDEC is there to meet, enjoy and talk to the principal and to listen and ask question. Anita stated that the principal would like to be able to welcome the CDEC in a positive way. Rob stated that the CDEC is there to listen and share information.

Superintendent's Report – Anita Saunders

1. Science Program (Specialized High School Institute) student must score at least a 686 on grade 5 CTB in both math and ELA. In February or March SHSI notifies the schools of qualified applicants and therefore applications are sent to those students with guidelines.
2. PS 173 given a grant of \$25,000 for the ELL Enrichment Program through Visual & Performing Arts. Also Anita & DOE trying to get Social Studies grant through Ackerman's office.
3. High School applications distributed – open houses October & November. (See attachment) 30 workshops are being given throughout the district so that parents can learn how to select schools of their choice & complete applications and submit them on time.

4. Marking period & report card distribution (see attachment). Report cards will be distributed November 9th or 10th.
5. Professional Development – teachers from every grade & school have been asked to attend the workshops for train the trainers (Social Studies, Clerical, ELA Testing, Library & Science). Every school in the city has been asked to give a sample ELA test. Lori Butera did a presentation at the Presidents Meeting.
6. DOE will provide the math practice tests and training guide for all schools.
7. Open School Week (November 14-18).
8. UFT conference on November 12th. (see attachment)
9. Regarding the PS 130 issue update– 6 spaces available in the kindergarten. Opened up to Dist. 26 and received 5 responses.
PS 178 zoned for 216 middle schools. The parents have an option to keep their children in 178.

Walter spoke about variances and busing and will keep the council updated. Also stated that the DOE does not assign Special Ed students to certain schools. Carmen Farina is trying to promote keeping Special Ed students in their own area or zone.

Walter updated the council on PS 98.

Anita stated that there are no variances presently & PS 178 is down 200 students. Council asked about funding in PS 178 and was informed that they can contact Marlene Siegel, Deputy Director at the ROC.

Old Business

Website – Ed advised the council of the cost. For 1 year it would cost \$95.52 (100 megabytes) for e-mail space, \$1.99 for domain registration and this must be renewed every year. Informed the council that he would meet with Marian on Monday to discuss the budgeting and how to get it paid and to look at the equipment that she has and the capability. Discuss getting a scanner and whatever is needed. A sample link was sent to the council members for feedback. Will have another update by Monday to send to the council members. The goal is to have it up and running by the middle of November. Will be doing it in PDF format and a disclaimer will be added.

Legislative Meeting – Jackie will have to look into having it at another location other than the Douglaston Manor. Rob stated that then CDEC will have to go back to the drawing board and check dates of others having the same type of meeting. Carol mentioned that the Presidents’ Council had their legislative meeting last year at PS 266 (in the library), so it was just a suggestion.

Rob announced the new High School student and asked that he tell us something about himself.

Adam Amit stated that he goes to Bronx HS of Science, he worked in Dave Weprin’s office and he is involved with youth groups. Rob welcomed him to the CDEC.

Rob made a motion to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15

Public Meeting

Public Meeting began at 8:30 in the auditorium.

Rob introduced the guest speakers - Marianita Damari & Jill Simpson, Regional Instructional Specialists of the DOE & they came to discuss the various aspects of science curriculum including its problems & changes needed to improve the teaching of the subject. (Handouts distributed) Summary of handout:

Overview of Science Standards

- National Science Education & its Standards

- Benchmarks for Science Literacy

- Project 2061

- Match Science & Technology Learning Standards

- Core Curriculum Guides for Elementary, Intermediate & Regents Sciences

- Scope & Sequence - Elementary (K-5), Middle School (6-8) & High School (Regents Sciences).

- K-12 Curriculum Development

NYC DOE's Initiative to Support Science Education K-12

- Science Task Force – 5 year plan

- Citywide Science Curriculum Development K-12

- iTeachiLearn – Mobile Computing Initiative (2 schools in each region will receive laptop computers).

- Citywide Piloting of Middle School Science Programs

 - “It’s About Time” – Project-based Learning

 - Science Textbook Modules Programs

- Elementary Science Professional Development

- Middle School Science PD & High School Science PD

- On-site Science Professional Development/Technical Support

Overview of Grade 4 & 8 Science Assessments

- Multiple Choice Items

 - Students’ knowledge and understanding of core material.

- Multiple Choice & Constructed-Response & Extended Items (students’ ability to apply, analyze and evaluate material).

- Constructed-Response and Extended Items (students’ ability to apply knowledge of science concepts & skills to address real-world situations constructed response).

- Performance Test – Open-Ended Items (students’ skills in using hands-on equipment & material in his/her responses to the questions posed).

High School Regents Science Assessments

- Living Environment, Earth Science, Chemistry & Physics

 - Multiple choice items (students’ knowledge & understanding of core material).

 - Multiple Choice & Constructed-Response & Extended Items (students’ ability to apply, analyze and evaluate material).

 - Constructed-Response and Extended Items (students’ ability to apply knowledge of science concepts & skills to address real-world situations constructed response).

Living Environment – multiple choice & open-ended questions.
Earth Science – Lab Practical Test and Open-ended items.

Discussed were the essential features of classroom inquiry and their variations.

A comparison of Science & Reading Skills outlined.

Discussed the Science Workshop structure.

Spoke about creating an effective learning environment in the home and what materials and supplies are needed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Marian Mason, Administrative Assistant, CEC 26.