

Community District Education Council District 26

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MINUTES OF BUSINESS & CALENDAR PUBLIC MEETINGS

Date: Wednesday, November 17, 2010

Time: Business Meeting-7:00 P.M.; Public Meeting-8:00 P.M.

Location: MS 67 – 51-60 Marathon Pkwy, Little Neck, NY -Room B44A

The meeting of the Community District Education Council of District 26 (CDEC26) was called to order by Rob Caloras, President at 7:15 pm.

Roll Call: Jeannette Segal, Rob Caloras, Irene Fennell, Dina Quondamatteo, Ricky Chan, Irene Cheung & Susan Shiroma

Excused– Pia Alexander, Ismael Fuentes & Marie Pollicino

Also in attendance were Anita Saunders, Community Superintendent & Lori Butera, and District Family Advocate

Business Meeting

1. Minutes – Rob made a motion to accept the minutes October 27th with the change amended on page 2, paragraph 2 (Pia spoke about the purchasing of snacks for the Bayside HS pumpkin festival which is open to all children). Ricky stated he would look into it. **Amended** -Ricky stated he would look into it. **Changed** to -Council agreed that they could not sponsor this event. Council agreed unanimously to accept the minutes with the amendment.

2. President's Report

a. Discussed Klein's resignation and the appointing of Cathie Black as the new Chancellor in which people were very annoyed. A letter was written and sent to the local newspapers from Rob Caloras as an individual. A copy of the letter was given to members to review/comment for distribution to elected officials voicing the council's opinion and this is to let them know that the council will be registering their complaint/belief.

As you know, Mayor Bloomberg has appointed Cathleen Black as the new NYC Schools Chancellor to succeed Joel Klein. This selection was shrouded in secrecy and as far as known, she was the only candidate. Such unique status is not a reflection of her abilities for this job, but, dare I say her being a part of the Bloomberg social and business network. The Mayor's choice is a corporate executive and magazine publisher, immersed in media experience, but without any education experience. Not surprisingly, neither she nor her children attended public school. In fact, she has acknowledged having zero knowledge of the public school system. The Mayor has chosen her for her management abilities, yet she has no experience with negotiating unions or working in the government. As such, she has no management experience that is related to being the Chancellor of our schools. Clearly, her background does not qualify her to lead a school system of 1.1 million public school students.

Given her lack of qualifications, pursuant to NY Education Law, § 3003, she must receive a waiver from Education Commissioner David Steiner. According to the law, a waiver is available to only those "whose exceptional training and experiences are the substantial equivalent of such requirements and qualify such

persons for the duties of a superintendent of schools.” Based on Ms. Black's background, it is clear that she is not eligible for this waiver and her request must be denied.

Our current Chancellor also required a waiver due to his failure to meet the Law's requirements. However, at least he had attended NYC public schools and actually taught in a NYC school at one point in his career, and work in the public interest for several years. As you know, during his terms many changes were wrought to our schools, and his impact will be debated for many years. However, what stands out to Community District Education Council 26 is that during his reign, school organizations changed four times in an effort to prevent the DOE from being held accountable, standard test scores and graduation rates were manipulated, principals were held accountable for things they had little control over, teachers were blamed for every problem in the education system, parents were prevented from being meaningful participants in their children's education, and students continued to suffer with crowded classrooms, to evaluations that obsessively rely on standardized tests, to doing too much standard test preparation work, and to learning by rote about a narrowed curriculum. To prevent the further **deterioration** of the education system, we must have a Chancellor who is not only a good manager, but an educator. If the Mayor would conduct an actual search beyond his social comfort zone, a person with such qualifications can be found. Only with a Chancellor with these qualifications, will proper learning return to our schools. For these reasons, CDEC26 urges you to take the necessary steps to deny the granting of the waiver to Cathleen P. Black.

Ricky stated that they should give Ms. Black a chance and would like to change the word “**corruption**” to “deterioration”.

Jeannette feels council should state their case as soon as possible because once she's in that's it. Jeannette feels that Ms. Black is not qualified for the job and the fact that there was never a public meeting to discuss. Jeannette feels that D26 has to have a strong voice and act right away and that the DOE should not be run as a business and feels that a Chancellor should know about the public education system.

Irene Fennell stated that Ms. Black is not qualified and does not have the necessary background for the job at all.

Rob stated that Ms. Black refused to meet with other DOE employees.

Dina stated that Rob is referring to the law in the letter and not to her as an individual and feels it should not be run as a business.

Susan stated that parents want more of a public discussion to meet Ms. Black and would like Ms. Black to go out and meet the public.

Rob asks that a motion be made to accept this letter and Dina seconded. Council agreed unanimously to accept with the minor word change.

Letter will be sent to elected officials on letterhead-Board of Regents and other listings.

Old Business

1. School Visits/PTA

- a. Rob stated he contacted PS 205 and will be attending a PTA meeting in January.
- b. Irene Fennell will also be going to PS 15 PTA's meeting.
- c. Rob stated that a PTA meeting is being held at MS 67 on Nov. 18th.

2. Council Vacancy – no applications received – deadline November 29th. Will follow up at the next meeting and request suggestions from the DOE. Rob stated that the council will make every effort to identify those students who are ELL and send the flyer to the parent. Rob suggested that they make mention at the PTA meetings. Jeannette asked that Parent Coordinators assist in identifying ELL students and make contact with their parents.

3. Budget -

- a. Per Ricky – no activity change
- b. P-Card (not available as of yet)
- c. Susan suggested getting a new shelving rack for the notices and will bring three pictures in at the next meeting.

New Business –

1. Discussion regarding Gifted & Talented Classes
 - overcrowding at PS 115 regarding –
 - PS 18 did not advertise
 - PS 188 citywide possibly.

All schools are at the maximum. Mary Vaccaro, UFT Rep. - stated that they will be doing a grievance against the overcrowding. Mary Vaccaro will look into it and advise us at the next meeting.

2. Capital Plan – meeting scheduled for December 15th
 - a. Requesting Mary Leas and Monica Gutierrez
 - b. Recommendations needed by January 2011

3. Discussion on SOS Resolution (Save Our Schools) which was provided by Don Freeman at the last meeting (Oct. 27th). Rob asked did everyone read/review the resolution (see below).

Resolution to Support Save Our Schools is calling on the DOE to Provide Academic Intervention Services, Suspend High-Stakes Policy Decisions and Establish a Revised Accountability System and Provide Comprehensive Support and Guidance to the City's Most Struggling Schools

WHEREAS the recent attempt by the NYS Department of Education to counteract test score inflation resulted in a drastic shift in the number of students reported as performing below grade level, grade level, with 58% below proficiency in English Language Arts (ELA), up from 31% the prior year and 46% below proficiency in Math, up from 18% the prior year;

WHEREAS the number of students who tested in Level 1 on the ELA test increased from 12,000 to 63,000 citywide from 2009 – 2010;

WHEREAS in 36% of elementary and middle schools, two thirds of the students are not meeting standards in ELA;

WHEREAS according to the more reliable National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exams, New York City has not narrowed the achievement gap significantly in any subject or grade since 2003;

WHEREAS many cities have outpaced New York City in gains on the NAEP scores during this time period, revealing how Klein and Bloomberg's claims of exceptional progress are exaggerated;

WHEREAS according to the NAEPs, NYC's rankings in student achievement have fallen further behind those in other cities since 2003 among all groups, including Black, Hispanic, poor and non-poor students;

WHEREAS according to the NAEPs, NYC is the only city tested in which the average scores of non-poor students' scores have declined since 2003;

WHEREAS there are a large number of families in the City who were led to believe their children were proficient when they were not;

WHEREAS at a third of New York City high schools, a majority of the graduates who go onto one of the City University of New York colleges require remedial work;

WHEREAS it is difficult to determine whether an increase in state test scores is due to an increase in efforts spent on test preparation, to tests becoming easier, or to students' learning;

WHEREAS the New York City Department of Education's current accountability system relies predominantly (85% of the school report card) on standardized test scores in English Language Arts and Mathematics and the scores from consecutive years are used to measure "Annual Yearly Progress (AYP)";

WHEREAS the standardized test scores are the primary means by which determinations on students' grade promotion, teacher performance, and principal's bonuses are made;

WHEREAS the standardized tests currently in use are NOT designed to assess students' academic progress or to evaluate teacher effectiveness, and experts say that one year's test scores at the school level are primarily random,

WHEREAS there is a dire and urgent need for an assessment system that truly measures our students' achievement, our teachers' performance, and our schools' quality;

WHEREAS such an assessment system must be comprehensive and holistic and must not rely on any one particular metric as the major indicator of success;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the **CDEC 26 join with the Save Our Schools campaign** in calling upon the NYC Department of Education to respond quickly and concretely to this crisis by:

immediately developing and implementing a plan for intensive academic services for all students who scored at Level 1 and Level 2, including those now in high school; providing comprehensive support and guidance to the city's most struggling schools, working with parents and school communities to implement these proposals by prioritizing and targeting financial and program resources to serve the students and schools of greatest need, and take forward steps with the students and schools it serves to make this right a reality;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **CDEC 26 join with the Campaign to Save Our Schools** to demand that the DOE suspend for one year all high-stakes policy decisions based on standardized test scores and establish a revised accountability system based on reliable multiple measures;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that students throughout the system be provided with more individualized attention, including smaller classes particularly in the city's most struggling schools;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the new accountability system must be inclusive, drawing on resources and expertise available among teachers, administrators, education experts and parents.

Dina made a motion to accept the resolution (SOS), Irene Fennell seconded. Council agreed unanimously to accept. Rob asked that resolution be sent out to the prospective candidates.

Ricky Chan stated to the council that Melissa Torres is the new Sr. Grants Officer.

Superintendent's Report
CDEC Meeting
Wednesday, November 17, 2010
MS 67

- Welcome
- Parent Teacher Conference – Good Turnout
- Citywide Gifted Program – Proposal, PS 188
- MS 158 - \$50,000 Winner from BING Contest for Fine Arts
- School Leadership Team (SLT) Training
 - Overview – November 29, 2010 – MS 74, 4:00 – 6:00 P.M.
 - Advanced – November 30, 2010 – PS 26, 4:00 – 6:00 P.M.

Mary Vaccaro, UFT informed council that a flyer will be sending out a flyer for a Food Drive.

Lori Butera, District Family Advocate, sending a flyer out for the SLT Training Workshop and would the council co-sponsor? Council agreed unanimously to co-sponsor.

Rob made a motion to adjourn. Council voted unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

P U B L I C M E E T I N G

Rob called the public meeting to order at 8:20 p.m.

Speaker's List

1. Linda Courtney – discussed penalizing students for misconduct. Grade reduced for misconduct. New teachers not aware that this should not be done. Principals should be made aware and new teachers should be re-trained. Mary Vaccaro stated that this was brought to her attention and that this was addressed with the teacher and that she was unaware. Mary feels that maybe some of the new teachers need training in classroom management and it will be provided by the UFT. Anita Saunders will talk to the CSA & principals.
2. Jackie Soto – parent of child in PS 115 in the Gifted & Talented – spoke on overcrowding (30 students) in 1st grade which affects on the quality - pace is inappropriate – rectify the overcrowding. Mary stated a grievance is being filed.
3. Cerdi Beltre – parent of child in PS 115 in the Gifted & Talented – child in 2nd grade – overcrowded classroom (fire hazard) – child being affected physically – child without work book. Anita stated that there is no special allocation for a smaller class for gifted (30-32 children are acceptable). Anita, Rob & Mary will look into this situation and get back to this parent. Anita stated that the principal will get back to the parent by Friday.
4. Kevin Revell – will speak after presentation
5. Peter Pollicino – parent – child in PS 98 – child coming home coughing and watery eyes. Found out that he was getting close to aerosol deodorant. Teacher requested some kids to bring in deodorant and use after gym class. Child had reactions to spray. Parent requesting that certain aerosols be banned from the schools because of the danger. Anita stated that she would speak to Mr. Pollicino.

Susan questioning carrying an aerosol in their nap sack.

Jeannette talked about a program years ago (Boys to Men, Girls to Women) where they discussed deodorant. The issue here that's most concerning is that the teacher requested them to bring it into school but the fact that they brought it into the school and that the children where in the fifth grade and started to play with it which becomes a hazard, especially to those who are Asthmatic. Mr. Pollicino stated that any child with respiratory difficulties should not be exposed to any kind of aerosol.

Dr. Platt asked whether he knows of any concerns/complaints. Dr. Platt stated that he is not familiar with any data regarding this issue.

Rob outlined the next presentation in which the presenters will talk about School Wellness, one tool for combating the childhood obesity epidemic.

Speakers are: **Kathleen Grimm**, DOE Deputy Chancellor for Operations - **Dr. Roger Platt**, Chief Executive Officer, Office of School Health - **Eric Goldstein**, Chief Executive Officer Office of School Support Services & **Lori Rose Benson**, Executive Director Office of School Wellness Programs .

Kathleen Grimm thanked everyone. Spoke about the CDEC passing a resolution having to do with the Chancellor's regulation on "Bake Sale" in which adjustments were made in schools. Speakers will be giving the attendees the background as to how the decision was made to make sure children are eating healthy.

Dr. Platt – background as to how they adopted the policy.

Causes of death – heart disease – strokes-lung cancer and etc

Underlining factors are: tobacco – diet & physical inactivity & alcohol

Consequences of obesity & physical inactivity

-80% OF ADULT DIABETES

-OVER HALF OF PATIENTS WITH HYPERTENSION

-MUCH HIGHER RISK FOR HEART DISEASE

Obesity trends among adults in 1985 - the state skyrocketed except for Colorado

Epidemic 25% - epidemic in New York City – 30% overweight – 70% obese

Obesity treatment – drugs didn't work – gastric bypass worked

NYC public schools – 21% obese

– consuming too many calories (soft drinks –food-portions)

– size of drinks changed

– sugar – calorie intake (consuming 200-300 more calories per day) – increase in sweets has tripled.

Lori Benson – NYC vital signs

Zip codes – ½ public schools K-8 overweight

Childhood obesity affects all student groups, regardless of race, ethnicity or sex – Hispanic high

Students with better fitness (body & mind) have higher academic test scores

Congress required all school districts to have a School Wellness Policy in place in 2006 – NYC updated its Wellness policy in 2010.

NYC schools are part of the solution – improve food to include low and non-fat milk, whole grains and more fresh fruit – improve the capacity to deliver physical and health education in classes – provide healthier beverages and snacks – open facilities year-round for community use – partner with the Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene to increase health and support.

Initiate a School Wellness Council in your child's school – become a role model through your own healthy eating and daily exercise habits – Wellness council grants – NYC Fitness program – C.H.A.M.P.S. for middle schools and fitness – PSAL for high school sports – NYC Parks and Recreation

Lori stated that we should be creating a healthy food environment.

Eric Goldstein – School Food Support/Access

Participate in lunch programs – encourage principals to apply for after school meals – students should complete a means application – encourage participation in the FREE breakfast program.

Nutritional Standards – meet USDA guidelines – no trans fats, artificial flavors, colors, sweeteners, palm oil or MSG – reduce sodium fat and cholesterol – increase fiber – eliminate high fructose corn syrup.

Partnerships – Community partners including UFT, DC 37, Food Bank, City Harvest, WITS, DOHMH, CSA, Parsons New School and etc – School Community partners commence with monthly meetings with local school food managers, school administration, parents, students and faculty.

School food new initiatives – chefs move to schools – garden to café – salad bar expansion – refrigerated water jets – breakfast in the classroom and local procurement.

Questions and Answers

Meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

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