



# Community District Education Council 26

## New York City Department of Education

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<b>Alan Ong</b> <i>President of the Council</i>	<b>John Gavros</b> <i>First Vice- President</i>	<b>Roy Menendez</b> <i>Second Vice President</i>	<b>Adriana Aviles</b> <i>Recording Secretary</i>	<b>David Wong</b> <i>Treasurer</i>
<b>Council Members:</b>			<b>Danielle Giunta</b> <b>Community Superintendent</b> <b>District 26</b>	
<b>Sheng Chao Yu</b> <b>Dilip Nath</b> <b>Karen Rose Scutt</b>	<b>Michelle Liu</b> <b>Shajid Ali Muhamad</b> <b>Tanweer Ansari</b>			

**Website: [www.CDEC26.org](http://www.CDEC26.org)**

### June 21, 2018 Calendar Meeting Minutes

**Calendar Meeting: 7:09 PM**

**Meeting called to Order and Roll Call at 7:10PM by Alan Ong.**

**Present:** Alan Ong, John Gavros, Roy Menendez, David Wong, Shengchao Yu, Karen Rose Scott, Dilip Nath, Michelle Liu, Adriana Aviles, and Tanweer Ansari

**Absent:** Shajid Ali Muhammad

**Also Present:** Danielle Giunta, Superintendent District 26 and District 26 Team

I. **Welcome**

II. **Superintendent's Report:**

- A) End of year of summary of school accomplishment
- B) Recognition of Excellence in Teachers in District 26
  - PS 18 Melissa Niedert
  - PS 133 Patricia Ryan
  - PS 159 Evdokia Ballas
  - PS 173 Jessica Ana Kim-Wong

III. CEC26 President & members provided a platform to hear from parents regarding the proposed resolution for Discussion in support of Resolution calling upon Governor Cuomo, Mayor deBlasio, Chancellor Richard Carranza, and the New York State Legislature to vote against removing, limiting or changing the admissions criteria, such as the Specialized High School Admissions Test ("SHSAT"), for admission into the Specialized High Schools of New York City.

IV. **Public Comment:**

1) **NYC Council Member Peter Koo- In support of the resolution for keeping the SHSAT exam.**

2) **Maria Di Leone- Congresswoman Meng** is very sorry she could not be here herself this evening, but has asked that I read a statement on her behalf. Dear CEC 26,

Thank you for allowing Maria to speak this evening, and thank you for all of the kind messages you have sent to me over the past several weeks. In particular, thank you to Superintendent Danielle Giunta and Community District 26 Council for all that you do for our community. As you know, I am 100% opposed to the Mayor's proposed elimination of the SHSAT. As a Stuyvesant alum and as a Member of Congress who represents Queens, I know the importance of not only the test itself, but New York City's specialized high schools.

These schools are tickets to a brighter future; a future for which our community has, and will continue, to fight.

As my public statement in response to the Mayor's proposal said:

"Far too many of our city's elementary and middle school students are being left behind. As the mother of two young children who attend NYC public schools, I have witnessed these problems firsthand. The Mayor's decision to distract from the harsh realities of the NYC school system by proposing these changes is not only wrong, it is shortsighted.

As an elected official, I am disappointed that the Mayor and Chancellor failed to convene a meeting of all relevant stakeholders, including the elected officials of district 26, before they unveiled a proposal that seeks to dismantle how the City's most successful high schools operate. To exclude impacted communities from such discussions, or to pit them against one another, is not leadership.

I agree with the Mayor that diversity at the City's specialized high schools needs to improve. But community leaders and elected officials from ALL backgrounds must have their voices heard.

The Mayor could have chosen to pursue the creation of additional specialized high schools to meet demand, he could have requested more resources from Albany for every single NYC elementary, middle, and high school, or he could have chosen to address the broader systemic segregation in our City. Instead of focusing on comprehensive reform however, the Mayor chose to pursue a legislative agenda concerning how eight well-performing schools operate. That isn't a serious policy proposal, it's a headline."

My stance on this matter has not changed since that public statement. Just like the community I serve, I will not back down on this issue, and I encourage everyone to join me. Thank you.

### **3) Chinese American Citizens Alliance of Greater New York Statement –Linda Lam**

President, officers and board members of the Council

CACAGNY strongly objects to Mayor Bill de Blasio's proposals on Sunday June 3 to change the admissions policy to the NYC Specialized High Schools. His proposal to expand vastly the Discovery Program and set aside 20% of the seats for selected students who fail to meet the admission scores is unfair and unjust to the thousands of students who score higher than these favored students and would have otherwise been admitted. His further proposal to undo the fair and objective Hecht-Calandra Act with secretive, inconsistent admission criteria reverse-engineered to achieve racial targets masks his devastating failure to provide even basic K-8 education to vast numbers of communities in NYC, let alone the highly competitive academics needed for the Specialized High Schools. In one of his middle schools, only two 8th graders demonstrated math proficiency in five years.

More than half the students in the Specialized High Schools qualify as poor. Many are immigrants who rely on the objectivity guaranteed by Hecht-Calandra to compete on a level playing field for educational opportunities. Despite his denials, Bill de Blasio's proposals target Asian American kids and callously toss out their hard-won achievements. We call on Bill de Blasio to respect students who achieve, no matter their ethnicity, to stop pitting one disadvantaged minority against another, and to do something constructive instead:

Improve education for all communities, starting from the lowest grades!

We all know that District 26 is overcrowded and we hardly have enough seats for all our students. In 2015 we sent more than 400 of our middle school 8th graders to the specialized high schools, the highest number among all Queens Districts which we all are so very proud of. This is resulted from years of hard work by our diligent students and hard work of the teachers, and the unyielding support by their parents throughout the years and not just test prep to get them in the Specialized High School as stated. If the Mayor and Chancellor do away with the SHSAT, which high schools in our district can take in the 400 plus students otherwise would have

attended the Specialized High Schools? Do we have the capacity at present at our high schools? Do we add more trailers and make shift classrooms for our bright and hardworking students? Is this fair for them?

President, officers and board members of the Council, we urge you to vote yes to pass the resolution calling upon Governor Cuomo, Mayor de Blasio, Chancellor Richard Carranza, and the New York State Legislature to vote against removing, limiting or changing the admissions criteria, such as the Specialized High School Admissions test (SHSAT), for admission into the Specialized High Schools of New York City.

Thank you.

- 4) **NYC Council Member Barry Grodenchik** supports to keep the test. He made his points to Education Council Member Mark Treyger. It takes a long time for students to travel from our community. There is no reason our children needs to travel 2 hours to get to great schools. We need to expand a High School in York College Campus. I already pushed to get expansion for Cardozo HS and PS 46.
- 5) **Daniel Kennedy-** I want to inform you I do run the program for Kennedy Test Prep as full disclosure prior to my comment. I graduated from Brooklyn Tech in 1996. The school was quarter African-American, quarter Asian, quarter white, quarter Latino and quite diverse. What changed? The test hasn't changed because I teach the test. Over the year, the test became inclusive because it got rid of scrambled paragraph and etc. What changed? I went to I.S. 25 and did not take any prep program. My education prepared me to take the exam in the honor and SP class. The issue is not the test but the issue is the education. The test precedes what makes this exam special.
- 6) **Pia Xu-** The test doesn't discriminate against color, family or income. We spend money to support our kids and the seats should go to the kids that works the hard.
- 7) **Yi Han-** I have three kids in District 26 and I attended Columbia University from the education I received in District 26. The issue is that mayor and chancellor defined the change as a race issue rather than improving the quality of education. Every child has an opportunity to take the exam regardless of their economic background. We all worked hard and scarified for our children to get to where we are. I am asking the mayor not to make a race issue but improve the quality of education for all children to achieve the goal of attending Specialized High School.
- 8) **Charlie Vavruska-** Our specialized high schools- Stuyvesant, Bronx Science and Brooklyn Tech, they are the elite High Schools in NYC. The test doesn't ask you who your parents are. It doesn't ask you what your race are. The test is objective and on merit-based. This test provides opportunity for immigrants to give an opportunity for everyone to achieve the "American Dream".
- 9) **CEC26 Member Shengchao Yu-** The mayor and the chancellor are sending the wrong message to families in Queens,
- 10) **CEC26 Member Karen Rose Scutt-** I am not necessarily against the policy change. I do believe that evaluation our children skill sets goes beyond what can be produced on paper. I don't think the test tests everything. They have much broader set skill. I think we all need to be open-minded what is considered talent or giftedness. We have a great school and our kids have strong foundation which helping them achieve the test.
- 11) **CEC26 Member John Gavros** I went to Stuyvesant and took the test 1976. We had no test prep. We took the test and that was it. It's different today and our school doesn't prepare the students properly for the test. Buses are lined up front of 26Q188 and buses are lined up to take students to test-prep. At CPAC last Thursday, it was his idea to take top 2-3% of students from all middle schools.
- 12) **CEC26 Member Dilip Nath-** I firmly believe that diversity and inclusion are important but not at the cost of our family.

**13) CEC26 Member Tanweer Ansari-** I am an immigrant and chose not to attend specialized high school. When we go out business world, we are constantly taking exam and particularly for professional certification. You can't take away opportunities from one to give it to another.

**14) CEC26 Member Adriana Aviles-** Me and myself apologizes for anyone that didn't have an opportunity to take the exam. I heard from both sides. Everyone is working hard to move their children forward. It is just shame that DOE and Mayor doesn't provide opportunities in education wise. I don't agree with that we should lower the standard for the exam. We have to work hard for our children to work hard and we need more opportunities for children to succeed. We should not lower the standard.

**15) CEC26 Member David Wong-**I went to Brooklyn Tech. I also applied for Bronx Science and Stuyvesant. I didn't get into Bronx Science or Stuyvesant because either my score was not high enough or I didn't work hard enough to have the chance to attend the schools. I would be horrified to know that my seat would be taken away at Brooklyn Tech for someone who receive a lower score than I. There is a certain amount rigorous work in the test and there is the potential of children failing if they do not meet the coursework. I support keeping the test.

### **Comment Cards**

**David Xu-** My daughter is stuy alumni and graduated from MS 74. My family spent a lot of efforts to support her. We didn't take vacations to save money for her piano lessons. The test prep is not the issue. Thanks to MS 74 to build a strong foundation for her achievement.

**Jane Kang-PS 46-** I came to NY from Florida-in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I am also an immigrant from China. I did not do test prep but I got into Bronx Science. I was in gifted and talented in Florida. Their educational system did not fail me. How about proposing everyone taking the exam in the middle schools. Some kids don't even sit for the exam.

Some may argue that the test doesn't correctly represent the abilities of a student, but if one looks at the test, what is present on it is very similar to what is taught in schools. There is obviously a strong positive correlation between SHSAT scores and schools grades.

**Carolyn Bell PS 46-** I resent the fact that the Mayor has pitted Asian-American against Black & Hispanic Americans. Keep the test. Make available opportunities for our kids to excel. Build more excellent schools.

**Heyi Lu-** The top 6% of some schools students may not meet the standard of Special High School.

**JChu-** Kids admitted to specialized high school have innate talent and are groomed to be future doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects. I want to be treated by qualified doctors, represented by smart lawyers, live in sound architectural buildings but not by who is most popular or who gets better GPA in middle schools, based on teachers subjective opinions or was accepted based on the color of their skin.

**Sarah Yu (4<sup>th</sup> grade) PS 41-** The SHSAT should be kept. How else would eager students get into these great SHSAT high schools? Students should get the great education they deserve.

**Vicki Paladino (New York State Senate Candidate) -** I have a simple question. This is not a touchy subject. Keep the test! Fix your J.H.S. \$31 billion budget & more, where's the money going? This is a form of communism. They are dictating to you the way this school system should run according to Mayor Bill de Blasio. That's not how school system should not run. Out of two of my children, one of my child was admitted because of merit and another was not. NYC school system has \$32 billion dollar, where does that money go? In the poor community, why not increase the discovery program to grow education. Why not fix the schools and fire the teacher that do not do their jobs? Someone said that the privileged takes the prep course. We seek help and spend our

dollars to help our children grow but why not create after-school programs for all children to ask for help? The Mayor's wife picked the Chancellor.

**Adriana Aviles-** Our schools and teachers does amazing job in our district. Please help me acknowledge them.

**Janet Chen PS 203-** The NYC mayor should work hard to improve the education resources. He can't just lower the bar of the standard.

**Alana Leung-** There are not enough seats to begin with. When/how can we get more seats? Why not put funding towards the schools in poorer neighborhood to have advanced+ specialized teachers in their schools? Our kids need more seats.

**Gina Spanopoulos-**The issue of the NY city education system is not the SHSAT, it is the inability in the NY government to put children's education first. In order to succeed educationally, children must have a solid support system. I have eight children and only three were accepted. I believe that the test & schools should be for those who will flourish by attending.

**Shan Lai- PS 188** The mayor took away poor kids hope. It's very sad the mayor and superintendent continue to lie and mislead people by claiming that those who do well SHSAT are from well-off & privileged families while large % of them are actually from low-income who only hope to change their life is to study hard and get a good education.

**Yi Han PS 376-**SHSAT special high schools are the chance and dream for low-income & middle income families kids. Our kids should not be sacrificed for someone's personal political gain.

CEC26 President Alan Ong read out the resolution- Please see addendum A.

**Alan Ong motioned to move the resolution for voting on July 5<sup>th</sup> monthly meeting. Vote passed unanimously.**

Alan Ong made a motion to adjourn the public meeting. Seconded by John Gavros. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

**June 21, 2018**

**Business Meeting**

**Meeting called to Order and Roll Call at 9:18 PM by Alan Ong.**

**Present:** Alan Ong, John Gavros, Roy Menendez, David Wong, Shengchao Yu, Karen Rose Scott, Dilip Nath, Michelle Liu, Tanweer Ansari and Adriana Aviles.

**Absent:** Shajid Ali Muhammad

**Also Present:** Danielle Giunta, Superintendent District 26 and District 26 team

- I. **Minutes** was reviewed for May 31, 2018 and motion was made by John Gavros to approve the minutes and seconded by Tanweer Ansari. Motion passed unanimously for approval of minutes.
- II. **Budget Review** - Budget was reviewed. Motion to approve by David Wong and seconded by Shengchao Yu. Motion approved unanimously.
- III. **Superintendent Evaluation:** Superintendent Evaluation was approved and unanimously passed by CEC26.
- IV. **President's Report:**
  - I had the privileged of joining David at PS 31 awards night. I had the privileged to attend the Arista Honor society and graduation for MS 216. I am also attending PS 173 graduation.
  - John Gavros- I attended the graduation for 3 schools.
  - I attended PS 221 graduation.
- V. **Dual Language Committee:**

- Michelle Liu update CEC members on Dual Language Committee and exploring ways to inform parents of Dual Language Programs in District 26.

VI. **Old Business:**

VII. **New Business:**

- **Discussion took place regarding Proposed Resolution for SHSAT and procedures for July 5<sup>th</sup> meeting-**  
I am asking CEC26 members to research the policy.
- Michelle Liu requested for emails to be set up for council members individually for only CEC26 business.

Alan Ong motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 PM.

**Addendum A:**



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**June 21, 2018**

**Resolution calling upon Governor Cuomo, Mayor DeBlasio, Chancellor Richard Carranza, and the New York State Legislature to vote against removing, limiting or changing the admissions criteria, such as the Specialized High School Admissions Test (“SHSAT”), for admission into the Specialized High Schools of New York City, and to stop the assault on the standardized objective admissions criteria for the Specialized High Schools.**

WHEREAS, there are eight Specialized High Schools in New York City whose admission is governed by a single standardized objective criteria, which is an academic admissions examination called the Specialized High School Admissions Test (the “SHSAT”).

WHEREAS, these eight high schools are (alphabetically): the Bronx High School of Science, the Brooklyn Latin School, the Brooklyn Technical School, the High School for Math, Science and Engineering at City College, the High School of American Studies at Lehman College, the Queens High School for the Sciences at York College, the Staten Island Technical High School and Stuyvesant High School (hereinafter collectively “the Specialized High Schools”).

WHEREAS, currently there is only one standardized objective criteria for admission into one of the Specialized High Schools, which is achieving a score of a certain level on the SHSAT.

WHEREAS, on June 1, 2018, at 10:00 p.m., Assemblyman Charles Barron in the New York State Assembly (the "Assembly") sponsored a Bill number A 10427 (the "Assembly Bill") the purpose of which was to change the admissions criteria to the Specialized High Schools from the standardized objective SHSAT to subjective criteria.

WHEREAS on June 7, 2018, the Assembly Bill was passed on to the Assembly Education Committee, which voted in favor of the bill that proposes to diversify the Specialized High School populations by introducing subjective criteria and eliminating the use of the standardized objective SHSAT over a period of 3 years.

WHEREAS, replacing the current standardized objective SHSAT criteria with subjective based subjective criteria could lead to inequities in the selection process at the Specialized High Schools.

WHEREAS, this plan to remove the standardized objective criteria from the Specialized High School selection could lead to other issues, such as admitting students into rigorous academic programs for which they are not adequately prepared and may place them in a position where they do not have a realistic chance to succeed.

WHEREAS, replacing the current standardized objective admissions criteria for the Specialized High Schools with subjective criteria may lead to the deterioration of the quality of the student body and the Specialized High Schools as educational institutions in the City of New York.

WHEREAS, because of the significant numbers of students that District 26 sends to the Specialized High Schools, this proposed plan will disproportionately negatively impact the students and families of District 26 who are trying to break their own cycles of poverty and elevate into the middle class through sacrifice, hard work and determination.

WHEREAS, in order to broaden admissions to the Specialized High Schools, the City of New York should instead focus on improving the quality of education and instruction in all grade schools and middle schools in all five boroughs.

WHEREAS, rather than a plan that would eradicate the SHSAT, in order to enhance diversity, the City of New York should instead offer expanded and free high quality SHSAT prep courses that are geographically accessible to all middle school students throughout the City of New York.

WHEREAS, the proposal of removing the standardized objective SHSAT as the criteria for admission to the Specialized High Schools and replacing it with unspecified subjective criteria would undermine the noble aspirations of the American dream, would diminish the quality of diversity to which these schools aspire and would negatively impact the students and families of District 26 and others throughout New York City who have achieved and continue to seek to achieve admission thorough hard work, sacrifice and determination.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED AND DECREED: that New York City Community Education Council for District 26 calls upon Governor Cuomo, Mayor DeBlasio, the New York State Legislature and Chancellor Richard Carranza to vote against removal of the SHSAT and to stop the assault on the current standardized objective admissions criteria for the Specialized High Schools.

DRAFT