

Community District Education Council District 26

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SPECIAL MEETING

MINUTES OF BUSINESS PUBLIC MEETING

Date: Thursday, February 25, 2009

Time: 7:00 P.M.

Location: MS 67, 51-60 Marathon Parkway, Little Neck, NY -Rm B44A

The meeting of the Community District Education Council of District 26 (CDEC26) was called to order by Robert Caloras, President at 7:10 pm in Room –B44A.

Roll Call: Rob Caloras, Erik DePaula, Irene Fennell, Marie Pollicino, Patrick McShane, Dave Kerpen, Dina Quondamatteo & Vincent Tabone

Excused – Jeannette Segal & Irene Cheung

Present – Anita Saunders, Community Superintendent & Lori Butera, District Family Advocate

Business Meeting

A. *President's Report –Rob Caloras*

1. Newspaper articles – Daily News
 - a. Juan Gonzalez of the New York Daily News wrote an article about zoned schools closing without CDEC input and charter schools opening up in their communities without input from the CDEC's. Rob wrote him a letter thanking him for the article.
 - b. Marie Pollicino's quote on the article of "Bureaucrats and class sizes are up sharply".
2. Minutes - Motion to accept the minutes from the January 29th meeting as written made by Patrick, seconded by Irene Fennell. Council voted unanimously to accept the minutes.
3. Rob reiterated that the council members should write to the reporters in regard to educational articles. Take the time and respond, this way they would know that the CDEC does exist.
4. The Queens Civic Council has a forum about School Governance on Feb 2nd in which Rob was on the panel with Laney Kingston, April Humphrey & Phyllis Williams. A question was asked regarding the end to "Social Promotion". The numbers for Social Promotion seem to differ depending on who is asked. Rob asked Marian Mason, Administrative Asst to get a retention rate for the last ten years. In the interim he also asked Ms. Saunders, Supt. and Mary Vaccaro, UFT Rep for help also. He received percentages of students promoted in grades 1-9 from 1998-2007. Follow up e-mail sent stating that if you subtract the above percentages from 100 you would get the retention rate:

1998 – 6.3%; 1999-7.7%; 2000-8.9%; 2001-5.4%; 2002-4.9%; 2003-4.6%; 2004-4.1% (when policy was terminated; 2005-4.1%; 2006-3.7; 2007-3.4

This is a decline in the retention list. No comparison could be made. Still awaiting more information.

5. The State Senate School Governance meeting was held on Feb 5th at Queens Borough Hall. Chaired by State Senators Shirley Huntley and Toby Stavisky. Senator Huntley stated they are on guard and that the Mayor is handing out Charter Schools as if they were “chocolate chip cookies” and a lot of them are going to ministers in the African American communities and that changes will be made to Mayoral Control.
6. New regulations for the New CDEC’s have come out that if you are a member of a CDEC you cannot serve on the School Leadership Team (SLT), contrary to the Chancellor’s regulations which state that CDEC member may serve on SLT’s. Dave attended his training where he was told that you may serve on both the CDEC and a SLT. After the date of the meeting, a memo from Martine Guerrier stated that you may serve on both the CDEC and a SLT.
7. Spoke on Resolution being circulated without regarding actions of the Department of Education. Rob made a motion to adopt the resolution and council voted unanimously.
8. Letter from Senator Padavan thanking the CDEC for taking the time to comment on the issues pertaining to School Governance/Mayoral Control.
9. Rob did a follow-up phone call with Janet Dickson, NYC DOE liaison with the Nike Program. Ms. Dickson informed that 160 teachers from D26 who signed up for the grants in regard to the physical education curriculum (10 slots open). The training is in NYC on the weekends but another option is the in-class option (15 teachers needed). Ms. Dickson is trying to come up a system to cover one or two schools at a time. The nine schools are: PS 18, PS 41, PS 46, PS 98, PS115, PS 133, PS 159, PS 173 & PS 178. Each teacher will be given \$750 worth of equipment from Nike.

Treasurer’s Report – Erik DePaula

1. Memo from district 26 budget officer outlining deadlines for ordering.
2. Dave would like to put a proposal together in regard to advertising the CDEC.

New Business

Rob outlined the process of the CDEC Election format. Forums will occur where questions are given to CDEC applicants. The applicant makes a short speech about themselves. Voting Process will be the same with PTA Presidents voting, a Straw Vote Process will also take place, only for those with internet access.

Council feels that many parents are not computer literate and do not own a computer. Council feels this is not democratic. CDEC 26 will write a letter voicing their concern with the Department of Justice stating that this process violates the Voting Rights Act. Erik will research and draft a letter. Rob made a motion for Erik & Vince to prepare an open letter expressing the concerns with the voting/election process for the CDEC’s to be addressed to the Department of Justice seconded by Patrick. Council voted unanimously in favor of this letter.

Superintendents Report - Anita Saunders

- Learning Environment Survey
 - Bright Green Envelope – backpack or by mail
 - Completion possible:
 - On-line – www.nyc.gov/schools/surveys or
 - On-line – Queens Public Library – access to computers

- Nine languages: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Urdu
- Parents may call 311 if they did not receive the survey by the end of March to request.
- External vendor to collect responses – assures confidentiality
- CDEC Elections – District 26 - Training for PTA Selectors – MS 74, March 12, 2009, 7:00 P.M.
- NYS Math Test
 - Grades 3, 5 – March 3 & 4
 - Grade 4 – March 3-5
 - Grades 6, 7, 8 – March 10 & 11
 Teachers are being pulled from their classes to mark test papers.
- Quality Review
 - New Principals
 - PS 178 – February
 - PS 205 – March
 Next year there will be no Cambridge staff (ends June 30th).
 Superintendents will be doing the quality reviews along with some SAF's (Sr. Achievers Facilitators).
- NYS Social Studies Test – Grade 5
 - Results – Excellent (see chart)

Social Studies Scores - District 26 - 2009

School	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
PS 18	0	4	41	54
PS 26	3	3	27	53
PS 31	1	0	30	64
PS 41	0	0	12	47
PS 46	0	1	21	63
PS 94	0	0	12	71
PS 98	0	2	8	42
PS 115	1	1	21	44
PS 133	6	3	30	49
PS 159	2	1	4	66
PS 162	1	1	25	77
PS 173	4	6	35	94
PS/MS 178	2	0	21	43
PS 186	0	2	11	20
PS 188	0	0	9	67
PS 191	1	0	16	34
PS 203	0	1	15	103
PS 205	0	1	13	23
PS 213	2	0	18	40
PS 221	0	0	22	85
PS/MS 266	1	2	32	53

- Pre-Kindergarten Registration – Application Period Opens, March 6, 2009 – Directory available in schools and On-line.

District Family Advocate - Lori Butera

1. Workshop for parents – “Family Literacy” grades pre K through 2nd – organized through Channel 13. Two more workshops –TBA (one with interpreters –English & Spanish).
2. First meeting with parent coordinators & president council took place February 10th. Discussed grant writing workshops with Susan Shiroma & Debra Halpern. Next meeting March 16 for the second half of the grant writing workshop.
3. Attended a UFT District Family Advocate meeting. Discussed how the UFT and Family advocates can work together.
4. Workshop – “Brain Education Parent Seminar”, March 5 at PS 18 & March 9 at PS 46 which helps with stress management, physical health, focus, emotional regulation and imagination.

Mary Vaccaro – UFT Representative

1. Informed the attendees that some teachers will be at all public locations giving out leaflets in different languages due to the budget cuts (trains, buses, malls & etc) on March 5th.
2. Flyers for the Scholarship- applications available – 64 teachers will be honored also who have over 30 years of service. Dinner will be held May 14th.

8:30 p.m. - Vincent made a motion to adjourn and Erik seconded. Council voted unanimously to adjourn business meeting.

Public Meeting:

Rob called meeting to order at 8:50 p.m.

Dina Quondamatteo, council member informed attendees that Assemblyman Mark Weprin was hosting an Education Town Hall Meeting on March 8th at 11 a.m. at Queens Children Center on Mayoral Control of NYC schools with guest speaker Assembly member Steve Sanders, author of the law that established mayoral control of NYC schools.

Speakers

1. Gwen Sachs – gave council an update on the A/C issue at PS 224 @PS 26. Met with ISC Rep., Principal, Maintenance and Tom Keaney (School Facilitator) and it has been determined that there is no more capacity for additional electricity for A/C units. It will not be able to be done this year or the year after. The electricity cannot just be added to the 8 classrooms that house the children but to the school as a whole. We would like to look at the electrical survey for the past 10 years. The cost has been estimated to be \$1.5 million.

Rob announced the guest speaker - Jeany Persaud (Chair, Chancellor’s Parents Advisory Council) from the Public Advocate office of Betsy Gotbaum’s who was asked to come and give the feedback from Ms. Gotbaum’s report on School Governance.

Jeany distributed books on the “Final Report of the Commission on School Governance” prepared by Betsy Gotbaum.

- a. Commission formed to start a dialog across the five boroughs on mayoral control and understanding the law. (referred to booklet)
- b. Rob Caloras gave copy of testimony.
- c. Law not being enforced by the Chancellor. Check and balances needed.

Rob asked if there is a plan for a follow up report from the public hearings that are still taking place.

Jeany requested that she get copies of all testimonies. Erik will send a copy of his testimony to Jeany for publication also.

The response was that all information is being submitted with any new recommendations that the Public Advocates office is looking for a dialogue with CDEC’s to help change the law. It is important to testify and to hand in your written testimony which is then sent to Albany to the legislation.

Vincent made a motion to adjourn meeting and Patrick seconded. Council voted unanimously to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

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

Marian Mason