

Community District Education Council District 26

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MINUTES OF BUSINESS & CALENDAR PUBLIC MEETINGS

Date: Thursday, September 24, 2009

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

Location: MS 67- 51-60 Marathon Pkwy, Little Neck, NY 11004-Room-B44A

The meeting of the Community District Education Council of District 26 (CDEC26) was called to order by Robert Caloras, President at 7:05 pm.

Roll Call: Rob Caloras, Irene Fennell, Pia Alexander, Ismael Fuentes, Esther Jung, Dina Quondamatteo, Erik DePaula, Irene Cheung, Marie Pollicino & Susan Shiroma

Excused: Jeannette Segal

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

Business Meeting

Rob Caloras started off by introducing the 2009-10 CDEC officers: Rob Caloras, President; Jeannette Segal, 1st Vice President; Erik DePaula, 2nd Vice President; Marie Pollicino, Recording Secretary & Pia Alexander, Treasurer and Borough appointees (Dina Quondamatteo & Irene Cheung).

1. Minutes – August 27th minutes – Dina made motion to approve the minutes, Marie seconded and council voted unanimously to accept.
2. President's Report

E-mails regarding school liaisons:

a. Dear Esther (dated 9-18-09);

I have spoken with Linda Lovett, PTA co-pres. at P.S 162 about my being the school's liaison. I had met her at the school last year and she enjoyed my presentation on School Governance and Budget issues. She was also impressed with the fact that I had known both PTA Presidents for several years and enjoyed a good relationship with them. I also have known the Principal for several years and have worked with her on several issues concerning the school. Since it is important that we foster positive relationships with school's PTAs and Principals, I believe that it would be best if I continue being the school's liaison. -----Rob Caloras

Response-I do not understand why I cannot do the school liaison for PS 162.

You said at the CEC meeting on August 27, 2009, "Good choice. There are lots of Asians in PS 162."

Now, you want me to hand off. Why? What's going on? Why did you suddenly change your mind? If I go to PS162, we will not have a good relationship, will we?

Did the PS162 refuse me to be the liaison?

If you insist let's do together. -----*Esther Jung CEC26*

b. Good eve. - As my message indicated, I was asked to be a school liaison. I was not asked to remove you. However, since my message to you, the issue of having members be liaison's at school's where there children attend has arisen due to conversations with non-D26 council members and D26 council members. I believe we can discuss this issue at our next business meeting. ----- Rob

C.

Please do not make a simple one complicated. You said at Aug. 27 CEC meeting that my being P.S.162's liaison was a good choice because there are lots of Asians there. So, I was selected to be the school's liaison as in the 2nd page of the Minutes. You suddenly said in your e-mail on Sep. 18 that it would be best if you continue being P.S.162's liaison because it is important that we foster positive relationships with school's PTAs and Principals. You mentioned in your e-mail on Sep. 21 about the issue of having members be liaisons at schools where their children attend. I wonder what will be next.

As your message indicated, it seems that if a PTA President or the Principal ask a certain CEC member to be a liaison based on the long-time relationship between the CEC member and them, that CEC member should be a liaison for that school even though there was another CEC member selected in the formal CEC meeting. Is it only for PTA Presidents and Principals or for the school including students and their parents to work as a liaison for certain schools?

You make me strongly believe that it would be best if only I be the P.S.162's liaison. I also believe that you know the reason for that. All I am interested in is to help children and parents. If you have any comment, please e-mail me at estherjng@yahoo.com.

DOE PERSON TOLD ME THAT NOBODY CAN REMOVE ME TO BE A CERTAIN SCHOOL LIAISON AND THAT THERE IS NO SUCH REGULATION. I AM NOT GOING TO TOLERATE ANY DISCRIMINATION OR RETALIATION.

Esther Jung CEC26

Sincerely,

d. Rob C - Please send the following to Esther and cc members and Anita

You have accused me of acting in a discriminatory manner toward you in relation to the school liaison position at 162. As I stated in my previous email, you have not been relieved of that position. All that has happened is I was asked to be the liaison by the PTA President due to my activity at the school in years past. I also told you to foster positive relations with PS 162, it was best for me to do liaison work at the school. As you know, several schools have more than one liaison and my willingness to accept the added burden of being a liaison at another school was not a slight against you. Based on this, I do not see a discriminatory act; in fact, there has been no act against you. If you still see a discriminatory act, please inform me of such, otherwise, I expect a written apology from you regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Robert Caloras

Rob reiterated why the e-mail (a) was sent due to the fact he received a phone call. He states that he made a good impression and that he had been the liaison for 6 years.

Rob received an e-mail back from Esther asking why he was taking her away from being the liaison for PS 162 (b). Rob stated that he received Esther's e-mail (c) and stated he was insulted and his integrity is impugned. Rob asked in what capacity he discriminated against her in.

Esther informed attendees that she was a new member and chose to be liaison for PS 46 & 162. Later received an e-mail from Rob (a) and did not state that she could not be the liaison for PS 162 also. She stated that she had a child in kindergarten and a child poked her daughter's eye and lost sight temporarily. Esther stated that she filed a complaint against PS 162 and that she and her daughter were retaliated against. At the end of the school term, Esther had her child transferred out of the school. Esther Jung said

“You (Rob Caloras) just joined their (PS162) retaliation and discrimination against me”. I asked you to do together PS162 liaison replying your email but you did not answer my suggestion. Instead you just made up another reason to tell me that you wanted to do. I showed your email to my lawyer who told me that this person (Rob Caloras) definitely wanted to do by himself.

Rob asked if she brought action against the school (PS 162) and she stated “she did”. The council feels that she should have stated that there was a conflict of interest if she served as liaison at that school (PS 162).

Response - Esther Jung said

I told Rob Caloras why you didn't ask me if any CEC member filed a complaint against any school before we were selected as the school liaison, and that you called new CEC members “rookie.” I did not know I am supposed to tell this. I have no reason to hide. You are the president of council. You should know better. Why you didn't ask me or why didn't you tell new members here? Even some council members have been worked for years. They said that they still don't know about this CEC regulation. When I met and asked the other district council members with more-than-a-year, they don't know all the regulations. I just started this July. How do I know?

Ismael asked the question – if Rob had not told that to you in the initial letter (a) would your complaint have surfaced thereafter? Ismael asked - Would the council have ever known that you filed an official complaint against the DOE for a school that you represent?

Susan asked that the next in command (Erik DePaula, 2nd Vice President) take over the meeting and keep the discussion at a 3 minute time limit. Rob gave Erik permission to take over regarding this issue.

Ismael – question – if in Rob's initial e-mail (a) if at the conclusion of that letter he indicated to you, I propose that we in partnership go forward and represent this school. If you had accepted that proposal, would you have ever let the council know of the official DOE complaint you filed against that school that you now represent as a liaison? If this had not come up, would she have told the council of her own free will? Esther stated that “if no one asked her, she would not tell”.

Ismael stated that even if the situation is resolved, you being a council member you cannot objectively represent the interest of that school because of had happened.

Rob stated that it's not just your ability to put aside the claim but there are people at the school who know that a claim has been filed such as the principal. He informed her that she is the CDEC representative and its how the principal views it. People at the school know of this incident and how they feel is something that we have to take into consideration. Rob stated that it's a confidential investigation and only those who are asked to be witnesses would know of this investigation.

Rob at no point stated that Esther could not be the liaison. "Rob stated he thought of taking action in response to Esther's libel, but, decided against it. He also thought about seeking Esther's removal, but decided against it. However, unless Esther gives him a written apology, he will put in his resignation."

In addition, Esther stated that a previous council member (Ms. Lee) had to quit because when she brought the issue regarding helping Korean parents you guys told her that why you brought here, they had to talk to their schools.” Rob said that she was a nurse and couldn't make the meetings. Esther claims that she brought the CDEC an issue and was told that the parents have to deal with it at that school. Rob stated that it was a baseless allegation.

Erik – asked whether we should have a member be a liaison for a school that they have a conflict with? There is no regulation stating that the member cannot be a liaison for their child's school.

Rob stated that he has been accused of discrimination by Esther Jung and does not feel comfortable being the liaison of PS 162.

Irene Cheung made a motion to remove Rob and Esther as liaisons from PS 162. Erik made a motion made that we make an amendment that if you have a conflict with a school that you should not be the liaison, Rob seconded with an amendment that Esther & Rob cannot be at PS 162. Council voted unanimously. Motion seconded with the provision that Rob and Esther be removed as liaisons. Susan cannot support a resolution stating a member who has a complaint against a school cannot represent a school. More discussion on what a conflict of interest is with a school needs to be discussed. Vote to table the original motion, all in favor.

Esther Jung said, "Ewel Napier, Deputy Director at DOE told me that no one can remove you. Still you guys can remove me?"

Council member said, "Yes."

Marie Pollicino asked me, "Does he know your complaint?"

Esther Jung said. "Yes, he knows my case well."

Esther Jung asked all council members, "Does every district have different regulation? Why do you want to make a decision now even though DOE said OK?"

In addition, "I do not hold the grudge. From my 100% pure heart, I want to help the school. Many parents at PS162 still call me to ask for help."

In addition, "Lori Butera also knows about my filing complaint against PS162 before I was elected a CEC." And then when I asked Lori Butera, she denied.

Erik made a motion that a member cannot be a liaison where there as been a conflict of interest at that school. Pia Alexander told Rob Caloras that he should not send emails to everybody, he should have brought the issue to the CDEC meeting and talked about it, and Rob apologized.

Pia opposed Rob leaving and in going forward that the council should have a more solid guideline in how they communicate through e-mails and feels that it was misread and misunderstood.

Susan feels that Rob was not discriminating against Esther in his e-mails and feels that more training should be done regarding a "conflict of interest" with the DOE. Susan would like to have a discussion on what exactly a complaint against the school "is" and "what's" a conflicts of interest. Irene Cheung's motion to remove both members from PS 162, Irene Fennell seconded, 6-YES, 3-NO (Isamel, Dina and Esther) and 1-ABSTAIN (Rob).

DOE approved Councils for an additional \$17,000, Friday, September 18, 2009

Additional Allocation of Funds

As of September 18, 2009

						BUDGET	20,000
EXPENDITURE CATEGORY	QUICK CODE	OBJECT CODE	ACTIVITY CODE	LOC CODE	AMOUNT SCHEDULED	EXPENDED TO DATE	BALANCE
General Supplies	062641	198	0514	QS26	7800		
Procurement Card	062641	198	0525	QS26	2000		
Equipment-Computer	062641	332	0526	QS26	-----		
Rental of Water Cooler	062641	403	0530	QS26	-----		
Advertisement	062641	417	0535	OS26			
Local Travel and Food Expenses	062641	451	0515	QS26	5000		
Stipend Reimbursements	062641	496	0516	QS26	1000		
Copier Maintenance	062641	612	0534	QS26	-----		
Other Administrative Consultants	062641	685	0528	QS26	1200		
TOTAL					17,000		

NOTE : General Supplies includes: photocopying (198), printing (101), postage (117) , subscriptions and publications (198)

Approval of Council members

Robert Caloras _____	Pia Alexander _____
Erik DePaula _____	Irene Fennell _____
Ismael Fuentes _____	Esther Jung _____
Jeannette Segal _____	Marie Pollicino _____
Susan Shiroma _____	Dina Quondamatteo _____

Pia informed council that as of Friday Sept 18th, 2009 we received our budget money of \$17,000. \$5,000 was placed into the food expense (451) to reimburse Lori Butera expenses for co-sponsored events with OFEA and CDEC. Pia spoke about the expenses for Lori’s workshops for the month of October totaling \$800.

Pia made a motion to approve the budget allocation, Dina seconded. Council voted unanimously to approve.

Pia made a motion to provide the funding for the food for co-sponsoring the October workshops (\$800) and Council voted unanimously to accept.

Old Business

1. Town Hall Meeting regarding the Chancellor – pending acceptance from the Chancellor’s office.
2. Erik spoke about his Face book presentation which is being tabled for now.
3. President Council Liaison – Rob stated that there is not a particular liaison and that members will rotate going to the meetings. Dates will be told to the council.

New Business

1. Lori brought to the attention of the council that President’s council would like to use the CDEC room at MS 67 for their next three meetings. Rob made a motion to let President’s council have access to the room and council voted unanimously to accept.

Mary Vaccaro, UFT Representative informed the council members of the UFT dinner taking place October 13th at Trattoria Lucia Restaurant, 6 p.m. Mary will send Marian an e-mail of the event.

Council adjourned 8 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETING

Meeting called to order at 8:15 by Rob Caloras, President, CDEC.

Rob acknowledged the visitors:

1. Michelle Rowe, Parent Coordinator-PS 186 – thanked the CDEC for co-sponsoring the breakfast workshop in which 80 parents attended.

Superintendent's Report – Anita Saunders

- Welcome
- School Visits – 18, 26, 115, 162, 178, 186, 158
- Capping – PS 162
Grade 3 – 1 (159), Grade 4 – 1 (46),
Grade 5 – 4 (3-159, 1-46)
- Contract for Excellence Preliminary Plan – Presentation
- Quality Review – PS 98
- Inquiry Teams – 90% of staff; action research
- Excess Teachers – ATR – Placements by October 30th
- New Presidents' Council Executive Board – 2009-2010
 - § Kitty Azhar, President
 - § Ingrid Guapisaca, Vice President
 - § Donna Hovi Ostuni, Treasurer
 - § Kim D'Angelo, Recording Secretary
 - § Jodi Nath, Corresponding Secretary

Anita gave a presentation on the Contracts for Excellence Preliminary Plan. Anita stated that if anyone had comments or questions, that they were to speak in a tape recorder giving their name. If they don't want to do it publically they can submit the questions on a sheet of paper to the DOE (presentation attached).

Also present from the DOE: Ms. Sylvia Jamison, Sr. Grants Officer, Mr. Sandy Brawer, Deputy Executive Director of Business Services & Mr. Gus Hatzidimitriou, OSI, Sr. School District Improvement Liaison.

Rob informed the council that Ms. Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger will be the guest speaker at the November 29th meeting and she will speak on social promotion.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

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