

Community District Education Council District 26

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MINUTES OF BUSINESS & CALENDAR PUBLIC MEETINGS

Date: Thursday, September 28, 2006

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

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

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. in the Conference Room 128.

Roll Call: Rob Caloras, Carol Gomez, Melissa Dorfman, Dr. Lana Zinger, Jodi Nath & Bona Sun
Excused: Yen Shia Chou

Late: Susan Shiroma & Jackie Montgomery

Also in attendance was Anita Saunders, Community Superintendent, Janet Won, Local Instructional Superintendent & Lori Stein Butera, Parent Support Coordinator.

Business Meeting

Secretary's Report

Carol Gomez, Recording Secretary

- a. Reviewing of minutes – **August 29th** minutes were reviewed for corrections, changes or additions. Rob made a motion to accept the **August 29th** minutes and Melissa seconded. Council voted unanimously to accept the minutes.
- b. Council was informed that the September activity reports are due.
- c. Correspondence from Alley Pond Environmental Center

President's Report – Robert Caloras

- a. Introduced the newly appointed officers – Robert Caloras, President; Susan Shiroma, Vice President; Carol Gomez, Recording Secretary; Melissa Dorfman, 2nd Vice President and Treasurer position is vacant.
- b. Correspondence – November 6th announcement - 50th Anniversary of MS 67 at Douglaston Manor – seeking anyone who attended school to contact Bonnie Song.
- c. Education Issues – Math curriculum – fuzzy math – debate going on worldwide. Mr. Meer sent a letter to the council to address this issue.
 1. Overcrowding in schools – reduction to be done by the end of October. Randi Weingarten spoke on this issue and asked that all councils help with this issue.
 2. Mayor's Control – parents are being alienated from the mayor and re-organizations in the schools.
 3. Councilman Weprin's office provided the CDEC with information as to which schools get money and this information was forwarded on to the Grants Committee to communicate to the district that the money is available.
- d. Attended President's Council meeting on September 19th and was given the opportunity to speak about the Council. Spoke about the need for communication between the President's

Council, CDEC the individual PTA's and parents. In speaking with Bonnie Song, every effort will be made to work together. Rob informed the council that President's Council chose a CDEC representative, Cathy Cahn who is the PTA President of PS 205 and holds the office of the President Council's Corresponding Secretary. Cathy Cahn was available during the interview session for the CDEC vacancy position. Also discussed at the President's Council a joint project. President's Council has put aside \$3000 & is asking the CDEC to match it to put together a district wide program that will enrich the children.

Rob informed the council that he would like to vote on setting aside \$3000. Rob made a motion to set aside \$3000 for a joint project with President's Council and a committee will be set up. A meeting will be set up with President's Council to decide what the money will be spent on. Jodi Nath made a motion to set aside \$3000 and Melissa Dorfman seconded. The Council voted unanimously to set aside the money. Jackie asked if the \$3000 is not all spent can it be spent on something else.

Rob also spoke about the Grants committee which is nicely received. Thanked Susan Shiroma and Jodi Nath. Jodi stated that she and Susan were coming up with ideas for setting up a resource center at MS 74. Jodi mentioned the Parent for Partners Grant is coming up and will forward the information out to the schools as to the deadline and what is needed.

Rob informed the council that he spoke at PS 221 by invitation and made a short presentation. Rob informed the council that the Chancellor will be at the February 8th meeting and will be available for an hour. Council will work on the format for this meeting. Rob also spoke with Pete Maddaloni, custodian at MS 67 and also the Queens Chair of Custodial Engineers Union who informed him that there will be an \$11.8m citywide custodial cut. Most schools will lose approximately one part time worker and there will also be a lost of money for supplies. Rob stated that he believes that the cut is to provide funding for the Empowerment Zone. This will be discussed at the Empowerment Zone forum taking place October 17th at PS 205.

Rob and Susan met with Anita Saunders, Community Superintendent on September 25th.

September issues discussed with Anita:

1a. Which schools in our District are using Everyday Math?

PS 18, 26, 133, 159, 178, 186, 188, and 266 are using this curriculum. Please note that PS 133 and PS 266 are not exempt schools and therefore are mandated to use Everyday Math by the DOE. There has been no pressure to use this curriculum, rather schools are opting to use it based upon its merits and its ability to address the value added assessment method being introduced to schools. 1b. Have the schools using this curriculum gotten SLT approval?

Schools choosing this curriculum have had review and sign off by the SLT. Please note, pursuant to the Chancellor's regulations, the SLT is only an advisory board and the Principal has the final authority to choose a curriculum and purchase material.

2. What are your thoughts on the Everyday Math curriculum?

It is good in presenting many lessons in a differentiated manner. There is enrichment/acceleration in each lesson and the teachers receive training in this approach. In switching to this curriculum, it provides Principals an opportunity to use a consistent curriculum through all grades. Everyday Math is a product of work at the University of Chicago and it is designed for high end learners and seeks to get students to conceptualize the subject in an effort to increase understanding and appreciation. It also seeks to combat the anti-Math, Math phobic culture we live in. When NYC decided to use it as the mandated curriculum, many scoffed and found the choice inappropriately difficult for our schools. Everyday math is not a so called "fuzzy" approach. Research abounds that praises its approach and results indicate its value in high performing schools. It is also supplemented in classes with other material. For instance, memorizing times tables is still a requirement. Material from TERC and other

programs may also be used depending upon the teacher's evaluation as to what will enhance a student's understanding. This method is also appropriate to respond to the value added assessment that is being introduced by the DOE. Under this assessment, an individual student's progress is viewed so that even a student, who scored solid fours on tests, must show improvement. Any program is only a tool for teaching learning standards.

3. If a school uses this curriculum, does it also introduce topics using other methods?

Of course, see above comments.

4. Why must students in our District be required to provide basic supplies?

This is of course a budget issue and Principals try to use money for academic pursuits without leaving out the necessities like toilet paper. However, please remember, schools never provided loose-leaf binders, composition books, pens and many other supplies. Also, if a child brings tissues to class, the teacher can, to some extent, make sure basic hygiene rules are followed.

5. There have been complaints that students are being enrolled at PS 98 that are neither residents in the zoned area nor official transfers. Can you check into this problem?

Based upon a review, it seems that 3 people were suspected of being improperly registered. Mr. Lowenstein (District 26 Attendance Officer) checked on 2 and found them legitimately registered. The 3rd will be investigated soon.

6. Is a work or business address in the zoned area of a school sufficient to establish a legitimate registration?

No, only a person's primary residence address is acceptable.

7. Do you have the numbers for this year's NCLB transfer students?

See Chart provided.

8a. Have some middle schools been unable to have orientation sessions this year?

Not orientation, all middle schools had these. Rather, several had to cancel "Back to School" or "Curriculum Nights" events; where parents do a walk through of their child's scheduled classes and get a feeling for what is going on and is expected.

8b. If so, why would these programs be canceled?

These programs were for 2 hours and teachers would attend with the knowledge that there would not be a Parent/Teacher conference in the spring. The spring conferences are now mandated and therefore, teachers need to be compensated either with hours or money to attend the Back-to-School night. At MS74 and 158 teachers chose to do the program and accept a non-monetary form of compensation that was offered. At other middle schools, the teachers did not accept the offer. Rob suggested talking to the UFT representative and others and complain to the Chancellor the next time there is a contract that maybe the Council can push for, for the benefit of the parents and students.

Correspondence with Tom Huser – 20 questions previously sent to Kathleen Grimm regarding the Capital Budget and follow up e-mails were sent. Questions sent again to Tom Huser and waiting comments.

New Business –

1. CDEC Vacancy

Rob announced the CDEC (parent) vacancy.

CDEC Vacancy Vote – Council informed that **Rich Olson resigned 6-30-06** and Rob outlined the regulations. Informed the council that flyers were put out by e-mail to PTA Presidents, Principals, newspapers, Community Boards, and Parent Coordinators & hard copies were put in libraries. Two applications were received and reviewed by CDEC council members and PTA Presidents'. Interviews were set up with the two applicants on **September 14th**. A recommendation was received from the PTA Presidents and taken into the consideration. The Council was informed of the applicants' names: Debra Strassberg & Deepmalya Ghosh. Upon the completion of the interview, the applications were sent to TWEED and reviewed for eligibility and the council was informed the Mr. Ghosh was not acceptable due to the fact that his child was not in the district 26 school systems.

Rob asks that a motion be made to vote Debra Strassberg into one of the vacancies of the Council. Carol Gomez made a motion to accept Debra Strassberg onto the Council and Lana Zinger seconded. The Council voted unanimously to accept Debra Strassberg into the Council. Rob welcomed Debra Strassberg onto the Council.

Resolution - To fill a vacancy on CDEC 26 this occurred on **9-28-06**

WHEREAS, Community District Education Council members are representatives of the parents and community-at-large; and

WHEREAS, a vacancy has occurred on Community District Education Council 26 (CDEC 26) effective **7-1-06**; and,

WHEREAS, Department of Education rules and Chancellor's Regulation A-140 state that when a vacancy occurs on a CDEC, the CDEC shall fill the vacancy at a public meeting, after consultation with Presidents' Council and other education groups; and

WHEREAS, CDEC 26 has followed the regulations regarding filling of the vacancy; and
WHEREAS, CDEC 26 has selected a the best qualified person to fill that vacancy; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that in accordance with Department of Education procedures, Community District Education Council 26 hereby appoints **Debra Strassberg** to fill the vacancy as Council Member of CDEC 26, effective immediately.

APPROVED unanimously by vote: 8 – 0 (8 Yes; 0 No)

Not present for vote: Yen Shia Chou

PASSED and ADOPTED this **28 Day of September 2006**.

Rob announced that Debra Strassberg is now a member of the CDEC and welcomed her.

Rob made mention of the Empowerment Zone Forum taking place on October 17th at PS 205 and is asking everyone to tell people about it and please show up. Rob feels it is a real threat and everyone should come out and hear what the experts have to say on it.

Treasurer's Report –

1. Rob informed the council that the budget was still the same.
2. Should the council, they will communicate with the schools and provide copy paper to all schools in the district like they did last year.

Committee Reports - Zoning & Outreach; Curriculum & Grants Information

1. Zoning & Outreach – spoke about going to your child’s school and it being a conflict.
2. Curriculum – Melissa stated there is a meeting Sept. 29th at 11 a.m. Will be visiting PS 178.
3. Grants Information – The list of books for fund raising have been identified and priced. This list will be presented to the council in accordance with the approval to set aside \$300 to set up a grants resource room at MS 74.

Susan elaborated on the grants committee saying that District 26 is the first to set up a Grants Information committee and it is set up to provide training and send out grant opportunities to other public school communities. The committee is trying to identify grant opportunities that have been successful in District 26.

Jodi stated that she met with David Slutnic who is the Program Director for youth at the Samuel Field Y. He has written 9 grants which have been approved giving OOST (Out of School Time) children can attend these schools free and do arts and crafts, gym activities and do homework. This gives the children a place to go after school.

Superintendent’s Report – Anita Saunders welcomed Debbie Strassberg. Thanked the Grants committee because they are providing the principals with important information that they can use to get programs and other educational needs for their schools.

1. ELA 2006 – District 26 = #1
Individual scores to parents October 2006
Math 2006 – October 2006
2. School Quality Review – Principal Training – Session 2 (3 hours)
3. Grants – \$100,000 Gifted & Talented – Senator Frank Padavan
\$18,000 Gifted & Talented – Assemblyman Mark Weprin
\$4,500 Golden Apple Award – PS 205
\$2,250 Golden Apple Award – PS 94
4. Student Member – CDEC – nominee
Eric Lee, Cardozo High School
President of Student Organization
Former Student MS 67

Lori Butera spoke about the upcoming Parent Workshop programs. President’s Council has requested that the region provide another workshop further out. Lori now working with Bonnie Song and they now have a tentative date of October 10th at PS 266.

Rob welcomed Ms. Janet Won and introduced her to the audience.

Rob made a motion to adjourn and Melissa Dorfman seconded, council agreed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETING

Meeting started at 8:15 with the Celebration of the newly appointed principals (Ms. Nappi; Ms. Poulos and Ms. Peknic).

Rob started off with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Rob proceeded to announce the newly elected principals; Ms. Nappi-MS 158, Ms. Peknic-PS 18 & Ms. Poulos-PS 162.

Anita Saunders stated that these principals were appointed last year. She stated that they were all highly qualified and that District 26 has the best in instruction, leadership, honesty and ethics which is very important to the parents and students.

Ms. Saunders spoke about Kathy Peknic who was a former member of the district office instructional team – UFT district rep for the teacher’s center – teacher at PS 213 – former regional instructional specialist (ELA) and trained all the principals in district 26.

Ms. Saunders spoke about Dena Poulos who was a teacher in MS 172 – outstanding ELA teacher – joined instructional team – became the Interim Acting Principal at PS 216, PS 26, and PS 221 for one year, Assisted Principal for 5-6 years and now Principal.

Ms. Saunders spoke about Marie Nappi – Anita stated that she visited her class at PS 158 and saw the outstanding middle school math teacher who knew how to teach math. She was chosen as the Assisted Principal of MS 74 for 3 years. Marie is truly a people person and has a great smile. She is very fair and honest with her staff.

All principals were welcomed.

Janet Won; Local Instructional Superintendent acknowledged all the principals and congratulated them on their appointment as Principals.

Rob proceeded to call the speakers for the recipients:

Speakers for Peknic – Bendetto & Suzanne; CSA rep and Ms. Peknic

Speakers for Poulos – Jeanette, Joan Casale-Asst. Principal, Susan Singer-UFT rep and Ms. Poulos

Speakers for Nappi – Karen Scott-Asst. Principal, Mr. Sticco, Ms. Dapolito-Principal MS 74, Felicia Mercer and Ms. Nappi

Anita stated “now you see why these 3 people are so special” and congratulated them again.

Rob stated that these 3 Principals have qualities that were not learned in the academy or in a six month class but were learned because they are dedicated.

Rob announced the Empowerment Zone Forum taking place, October 17th at PS 205 at 7 p.m. and everyone is welcomed to attend.

Public meeting ended at 9:00 p.m.

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

