

Community District Education Council District 26

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MINUTES FROM BUSINESS /CALENDER/ PUBLIC MEETINGS

Date: Thursday, January 30, 2014

Time: Business Meeting – 7 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 Ricky Chan, 1st Vice President at 7: 10 p.m.

BUSINESS MEETING

1. Roll Call - Jeannette Segal, Susan Shiroma (Borough Appointee), Lucy Vieco, Leslie Rubenstein, Alan Ong (Borough Appointee), Ricky Chan, & Anastasio Politidis
Late – Jaya Patil - Jaime Alvarez-Isasi
Also present: Anita Saunders, Community Superintendent & Lori Stein-Butera, District Family Advocate
2. Minutes – December 19, 2013 reviewed. Motion to accept the December 19, 2013 minutes was made by Alan Ong and seconded by Anastasio Politidis.
3. President’s Report
Jeannette stated that she attended the Blue Ribbon ceremony at PS 46.
MVB meeting postponed until February in which the new principal will attend.
4. Budget –the Administrative Asst. increase has been allocated on the budget sheet.
Ricky asked Marian to add a total of the remaining balance on the budget.

Marian: asked if May 13 or 14 is good for the ballroom dancing. Jeannette asked for Tuesday, May 13 instead of Wed. because of conflict with religious instruction on Wednesdays.

New Business

Ms. Saunders welcomed the family members (wife & daughter) of James Ambrose and will be renaming the school in memory of Principal Ambrose at PS115. Ms. Saunders stated that h will be missed and that we are happy to welcome members of his family. Ms. Saunders stated that Mr. Ambrose was dedicated to the school and that he loved his family and his school community. Tonight we have the current Principal Kathy Sciortino who promotes the vision and dreams he had.

Ms. Sciortino welcomed the family of Mr. Ambrose and school members of PS115. She said he improved and did so much.

Mr. Burke, the Parent Coordinator, welcomed everyone. He initiated this process and now asks the CDEC to represent the renaming of PS 115 (Glen Oaks) to James J. Ambrose and to vote on this process in our minutes and then he will move the initiative forward.

Alicia Ambrose, Mr. Ambrose's daughter, read her heart felt request:

Mrs. Carmen Fariña, Chancellor
 NYC Department of Education
 52 Chambers Street
 New York, NY 10007

January 2, 2014

Dear Mrs. Farina,

We are writing to give permission, support and encouragement for the idea that PS115 be named after our husband/father, James J. Ambrose. We believe that giving this school his name would be of the utmost honor to his memory.

For almost a decade, James Ambrose lived and breathed for PS115. He dedicated his life to his work as Principal. Although he worked in many schools over the years, it was not until accepting his position at 115 did he truly find his calling. He often spent all of his time there, from the wee hours of the morning, until long after the sun had set. His family and friends would often tease him because even when he wasn't there, the school was all he could talk about! He would tell endless stories about students, parents and teachers, all of whom he loved and cared for very deeply. James really considered both his staff and students to be his second family, and 115 his second home. The education of the children was always his priority, and he set very high standards for their achievement. Under his leadership, the school received many "A" ratings, as well as "Most Improved". However, he never ceased to provide warmth and excitement for the school, by creating a central school wide theme each year, even going so far as having a beautiful fish tank in the main lobby! He also spend much of his own time and energy making sure that the school was always renovated, with a brand new auditorium, fully air conditioned, and beautiful new technology centers for staff and students. The stories are endless, as we could probably go on for days about the many contributions that James Ambrose brought to PS115. If you just spend a day there, and look around, it speaks for itself.

Please accept this letter as our written permission to give the school his name.

Sincerely,

The family of James J. Ambrose

Jeannette is in agreement and requests a motion. Susan Shiroma said she worked with Mr. Ambrose and everyone loved him.

Jan. 30, 2014 mins

Leslie Rubenstein made a motion to rename PS 115 to James J. Ambrose and Jaya seconded. Council voted unanimously in favor of the renaming of PS115 from Glen Oaks to James J. Ambrose.

School Visits

1. Leslie did a school visit at PS41. The principal spent an hour with her and they toured the building. They have the ABA program there. Only 2 other schools have that program. The autistic children get mainstreamed and the regular special Ed students go into the class also. This way they are socialized and the students begin to understand each other. They partner them into the co-taught classes. Some are very good as 1 scored 100 on the science. They are using the Ready gen program for the Common Core and Envision and Go math. She has pull outs for the children who need more help. She has many enrichment programs for Math and English. They have the apprentice program to learn presentational skills and design projects. They have a school newspaper. They have a wide variety of opportunities for students. They would like to get their electrical upgraded. They have an arts program for K-5. Each grade level puts on a show during the school year. They have a band and a chorus. Anita stated that they initiated the ballroom dancing.

Anita shared that PS18 was an original G&T committee. They removed them from the G&T school option list and that's why they don't have a 4th and 5th grade. Space is an issue. All teachers are certified for G&T.

Leslie shared information about The New York Education Reform Commission's final report, which was issued on January 14, 2014. The committee that was created by Governor Cuomo, was unable to address the following issues: Fiscal Equity; Common Core; Minority Students; Special Education Students; English Language Learners. The State Ed. Department has no plans to initiate any new exams prior to 2017. The Board of Regents is likely to vote to slow down the implementation of Common Core testing.

Alan asked about the I-ready program. Anita said I-Ready individualizes for each student.

Jaya said she bought Study Island for her son and feels it is a very good program.

Lucy gave a report on the meeting held on Jan 23, 2014 by the NYS Senators who hosted Commission John King at their meeting.

The senators raised many educational issues from their constituents across the state. They included:

1. The frustration felt by educators, administrators and parents of the implementation of the CCSS. There is a philosophy that it is like "building a plane while you are flying it". Teachers are learning as they are teaching it and learning along the way.

2. The lack of resources available to students and teachers with many teaching modules still being in the development phase. There is an inequity in having state tests aligned to CCSS yet the materials, modules, curriculum and the staff development for teachers is not ready yet.

3. The lack of timely feedback of the results of the state test in order to be able to do data analysis that informs instruction.

4. The interrelationships of the CCSS, APPR and the Race to the top funding initiatives. Many senators who spoke were former educators and understood first hand that the cart should not come before the wheel. These legislators held community forums that Commissioner King attended and heard firsthand the frustrations across the state.

Comm. King felt

- the demands of the 21st century are greater than in the past.
- ensure the students have access to opportunities to put them on the path to success.
- feels it is different today than it was 30 years ago
- youth unemployment is a challenge more than ever before
- feels there must be a balance with ensuring there is a sense of urgency that all students have access to opportunity
- mentioned that only 5% of ELLs and only 3% of Sp Ed passed the state test

The committee's chair, Sen. John Flanagan, asked Commissioner King to consider

1. Returning the test results sooner
2. Since the governor didn't put any funds in the budget for prof. development he suggested taking funds from the competitive grant money and the teacher performance fund and putting the money in teacher development.
3. Asked Comm. King to be an ally to make sure there is parental buy in with workshops and other outreach.

Comm. King said the Board of Regents has already discussed:

1. Waiver with assessment flexibility for Sped and ELLs
2. An evaluation review process to help districts reduce the number of assessments administered to students
3. Regents exams transitions over the next 4 years to shift to CCSS Regents in 2017 exams

In February, the Commissioner plans to release an action plan regarding budget issues and adjustments

To get more information or see the video of the meeting go to NYSENATE.Gov

School visit 1/27/14 at PS18 by Lucy Vieco

The school is doing some great things preparing the children for the upcoming tests. Students have access to an online program called Study Island that improves ELA and Math. They are also using I-Ready, an online program that evaluates a student's skills and then assigns practice work based on their individual needs. Students will have time in school as well as access all year and during the summer also. The publisher of I-Ready also offers workbooks which will be used in class. The school also offers afterschool, private instruction with a program called Early Scholars which is a fee based offering.

Last year Mrs. Peknic had a Reso A funding project to upgrade her electrical but the electrical limitations continue to be an issue with the increased need for smart boards and computers.

At a recent PTA meeting they had very high attendance. Parents were concerned about 2 big issues:

1. Next year there will not be a pre-K class at PS18 because their SLT decided to have a G&T Kindergarten. Parents were upset and asked about adding on to the building to accommodate all children.
2. The parents were concerned about the way the G&T program was changed without any notification or transparency.

PS 18 will be holding their yearly Town Hall Meeting on School Safety hosting many different speakers.

Jeannette said we have many programs in the elementary, middle but not high school.

Motion to adjourn the business meeting was made by Jaya Patil and 2nd by Ricky Chan. Council voted unanimously to adjourn business meeting.

Public Meeting

The meeting of the Community District Education Council of District 26 (CDEC26) was called to order by Jeannette Segal, President at 8: 00 p.m.

Roll Call - Jeannette Segal, Susan Shiroma (Borough Appointee), Lucy Vieco, Leslie Rubenstein, Alan Ong (Borough Appointee), Ricky Chan, Anastasio Politidis, Jaya Patil & Jaime Alvarez-Isasi

Also present: Anita Saunders, Community Superintendent & Lori Stein-Butera, District Family Advocate

1. Voting of IEP Candidate

Discussion to vote on IEP representative.

Council voted for Roy Menendez (8 yes – 1 Abstain-Ricky Chan). Resolution attached.

Jeannette apologized for missing the last meeting. She was informed about the G&T issue. She has been communicating with the DOE.

Anita said she spoke with Sandy Ferguson who is in charge of the process who stated that the concerns are heard however, no official resolution has been issued as yet. When received they will notify the principals. No one from the DOE will be here this evening.

Assemblyman Braunstein said the elected officials spoke to DOE and Sandy Ferguson and they were told the G&T would be grandfathered to grade K. They went to the press and informed the public of the resolution. The elected officials feel it is the way to go.

Anita received a message to call the DOE and was told there is NO official resolution. She does not have more information.

Jeannette thought the news would be positive but not the case.

Anastasio asked why more seats couldn't be opened up.

Anita is not sure why the DOE has not made a decision and there will be a formal resolution forthcoming.

Leslie disagrees with the resolution to grandfather the current K-5 G&T students to be put in G&T. Leslie wants to understand the impact. She requests that DOE should send a representative to speak to the parents.

Jeannette asked Mr. Braunstein to ask legislators to call DOE.

Audience Speakers:

PS188 parent Shamida: Congrats to PS 203 and PS 115 parents for voice issue. It is a fact that G&T students go into the general Ed program they will be bored and become disruptive. Question- how is it grandfathered? She wants middle schools to run to capacity with G&T classes.

Tom Wong; parent at PS188 G&T. Who is in charge of making the final decision? Is the Chancellor against it and who can override her?

M. Shajid: PTA co-president at PS18. Disagrees that G&T is not a matter of pride but a matter of test results and they should get special treatment. They only need a certified teacher as no extra funding is given to G&T students. The parents got a response from DOE different from what is being said at CDEC meetings.

Shitra: Parent of PS188. Not aware of fight. She agrees with changes but the manner implemented was sudden. She feels opening the G&T program is a good idea but to give priority to G&T students.

PS18 parent Andrea Lomlouhi; Miriam Zambrano co-president at PS18 spoke on her behalf. She has 160 students in G&T because of gap mentioned by Ms. Saunders. They united with PS 203 parents and she feels she was not informed of the issue and is concerned. Requesting that parents be included.

PS 188 Michelle Cespedes: disagrees with Leslie because she feels all G&T deserve the seat they were told they would get. She is disappointed that no DOE representative is here. She is urging CDEC and Ms. Saunders to stand united. Many housing decisions are based on schools. State test do not determine giftedness. She is affected as she has a daughter in G&T.

PS 115 Jackie Soto: She said she has an issue with the logic behind it. There is not extra funding. She understands first hand that these students are capable of more. Make more classes available as G&T.

Jeannette clarified that teachers need an additional certification in G&T.

PS 115 P. Sadiqi: He has 2 students in G&T and is concerned about delivering the message to his daughters. Also concerned about that CDEC is not on the same page for the resolution. He asks that the CDEC direct the parents where to go for next steps to achieve what they want.

Leslie feels the CDEC represents all the students and we do not have more information than the parents do.

PS 203 Jackie Ling: Thanks the CDEC for advocating and service. Thanks Superintendent for decades of service. We are above where we started. They have a Facebook page and a page on change.org with 800 signatures. Keep calling and emailing. In the petition, we are not against opening the seats to others but rather adding seats. Seems ridiculous that CDEC did not know.

Anita said when she was called to DOE last year she was told this was happening.

Jeannette clarified that the DOE has no power but we represent the D26 students.

PS 203 Yee Chen: She is confused and doesn't trust DOE to represent her child's education. When she came in November to middle school information session and came to CDEC Ms. Saunders informed council. She feels she did not get the information in March when Mrs. Saunders said she informed the CDEC. She is confused about whom to trust and go to for accurate information.

Leslie said at the last meeting she asked the DOE rep who attended why test scores were being used to determine placement when Chancellor Walcott had said that would not happen.

PS115 Laura Tujak: Feels students are getting the message being sent that G&T isn't special.

Karen Lin has 3 children in 3 different schools (2 in G&T and 1 is not). She represents the interest of both. She feels she wants to support the past practice of automatic feeder. She feels the DOE should have known that parents were told the G&T was through 8th grade. There were parents who would have chosen not to go

Anita says the past practice was guaranteed middle school but they had to keep up.

PS 188 Parent Bahana: Requesting G&T is grandfathered for K-8. When her daughter took the test in Pre-K but there was no school was offering G&T class in kindergarten. She has a letter saying that child does not have to take the test for first grade. Feels parents should be given to the best schools. She will forward the letter she received.

Assemblywoman Rozic represents our students and stands with the parents. She mentioned the conference call. She has come a long way since the initial talks with that were stonewalled by DOE. All legislators will stand with the parents. She will call the DOE and the Mayor's office tomorrow.

PS18 Gail Cohen: Guardian of 2nd grader at PS18 not in G&T. In D30 nothing was in writing and parents were promised. SLT said 4 classes for grade K. a current G&T class in library. She feels the pre-k is an issue for PS18 parents.

UFT Mary Vaccaro informed the attendees that she had applications for UFT Scholarship. They will be honoring Jim Ambrose and 3 students who passed away in our district. Lori Butera (District family Advocate) is also an honoree.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
AGENDA

- Welcome
- Pre –K – PS 133 from PS 18
- Quality Review
- MS 158 – Completed January 29-30, 2014
- PS 31 - February 25-26, 2014
- MS 67 – March 12-13, 2014
- PS 94 – April 8-9, 2014
- PS 115 – May 6-7, 2014

Additional QR – Another Reviewer

- PS/IS 178 – March 24-25, 2014
- PS 173 – February 26-27, 2014
- PS 221 – May 13-14, 2014

- Bullying Workshop – Flyer

Quote:

“The achievements of an organization are the results of this combined effort of each individual.”
Vince Lombardi, Pro Football Hall of Fame Coach

Lori Butera-District Family Advocate spoke about a bullying and cyber-bullying workshop with a keynote speaker a professor in criminology. She is reaching out to parents, police dept. and DA's office and local legislators to be part of this event.

Anita says if we get notification, we should have a special meeting. Jeannette will reach out to Randy, our DOE contact in regard to a special meeting for the G&T. We would have to notify the community. The tentative meeting is scheduled for Feb 6 or Feb 13.

Motion to adjourn the public meeting was made by Jaya Patil & seconded by Alan Ong. Council voted unanimously to adjourn public meeting.

Meeting ended 9:50 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Lucy Vieco