

Community District Education Council District 26

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MINUTES OF A PUBLIC MEETING

Date: Thursday, January 19, 2006

Time: PUBLIC/FORUM MEETING - 7:00 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 7:10 p.m.

Attendees: Rob Caloras, Susan Shiroma, Jackie Montgomery, Edward Fallacaro, Bona Sun & Richard Olson

Excused: Shakira Gafar-Kirshnitz, Melissa Dorfman, Carol Gomez, and Adam Amit.

Unexcused: Yen Shia Chou

Walter O'Brien, Local Instructional Superintendent & Lori Stein Butera also attended.

Elected Officials – Senator Padavan & a representative from Assemblywoman Carrozza's office (Gene McSweeney)

Rob Caloras, President of the CDEC started off by saying this was deemed necessary due to the fact that a decision will be made the end of January or the beginning of February by the Chancellor. Rob proceeded to say that parents came to the December CDEC meeting voicing their opinion regarding the proposal to change PS 159 from a K-6 school into a K-5 school. This change would result in students from PS 159 going to IS 25 in District 25 for grades 6, 7 & 8 instead of only grades 7 & 8. The CDEC feels that this is a zoning issue.

Speakers were called to voice their opinion:

1. Ms. Damari Fallacaro, PTA President at PS 159 – her concern is that she doesn't want to lose the 6th grade and the wonderful programs given at PS 159.
Ms. Fallacaro proceeded to outline all the meetings attended in regard to this issue and the outcomes: 1-6-06, petitions sent to parents; 1-11-06, District 25 held a meeting & Judith Chin attended; 1-12-06, PTA met with Judith Chin & Ms. Foley (Supt. of Dist. 25); 1-17-06 President's Council meeting & PS 159 discussed. President's Council not in favor of change. Ms. Fallacaro also feels that this is a re-zoning issue.
2. Barbara Kopp – PS 159 parent spoke & voiced her concern to keep PS 159 in District 26.
3. Mary Ellen Muller – PS 159 parent – stated that she has 2 children in PS 159 and their love for the principal and staff. Feels that the programs instituted in P 159 will not be duplicated in District 25. Feels that it would cause hardship to the parents in graduation costs. Stated that District 25 changes should not affect District 26.
4. Jean Marie Kessel, PS 159 parent – change would have impact on PS 159 parents & homeowners in the district.
5. Senator Padavan – emphasized on what the CDEC's role is and their responsibility. Stated that this a "ridiculous" change. Letter sent to Chancellor on 12-20-05 but no response to date.

Feels that a more productive move would be K-8. Senator will ask the Chancellor “why” this change is taking place and what is best for the child. Enrichment programs will not be given in District 25 as in District 26 but will try to turn this around.

6. Bernie Coen – before moving to Bayside, checked for the best education district. Feels that zoning needs to be address. Felt that the 5th graders would be short-changed and that the standards are excellent and should be taken to other areas.
 7. Debbie Brady - moved into District 26 because it has academic standards. Stated that Ms. Zucker does a great job.
 8. Ray Rivera – stated that he has 2 children who have gone to PS 159 and it creates independent children. Stated that Ms. Zucker is great and that the teachers communicate with the students. Informed the attendees that two family houses are being built causing more children to be in the schools.
 9. Spencer Rivera (student) read a letter from and friend of his saying they want to stay in PS 159 and that there are lots of fights in IS 25. Spencer stated that he wants to stay in PS 159 and feels that IS 25 does not come close to PS 159 academically. Spencer wants to enjoy all the festivities at PS 159 (graduation, senior trips, ballroom dancing & etc.).
 10. Linda Post – 13 years as a parent in PS 159, in favor of re-zoning but not for 2006-2007 year. Don’t agree with the 6th graders being pushed out in 6 months. Stated that IS 25 cannot give academic & social support to the students. Asked “what will happen to the 100 seats that will be empty? Says that she moved into the neighborhood because of the schools but will look elsewhere if the change takes place. The change will also affect the homeowners.
 11. Michael Collins (student) – read a letter stating” it was not fair and would like to graduate from PS 159.
 12. Gene McSweeney (representative from Assemblywoman Carrozza’s office) – he received a letter from Ms. Fallacaro, PTA President at PS 159. Mr. McSweeney does not understand the purpose of the change and is not in favor of it. Mr. McSweeney stated “who would want to make a detrimental change that would effect their child’s education”. Mr. McSweeney stated he would speak to Assemblywomen Carrozza and convey these concerns.
 13. Bonnie Song-Co President, President’s Council – made a motion to endorse PS 159 back into District 26.
 14. Melvin Meer – asked “what is the solution to this problem” and this was addressed to Walter O’Brien, Local Superintendent.
Mr. O’Brien stated he would present to the regional superintendent.
 15. Susan Shiroma, CDEC Vice President, stated that IS 25 has a high suspension rate and does not compare with District 26.
- Ed Fallacaro, CDEC Treasurer stated that he is very much involved in the community and had attended a meeting with Judith Chin and she was not aware of this problem.

After hearing all the issues and concerns, Rob and the Council suggested doing a proposed Resolution to this issue which is stated below:

January 19th, 2006

Whereas, Administrators of Region 3 of the New York City Department of Education are proposing to implement a change in the grades attending Intermediate School 25, District 25 ("IS25").

Whereas, this change entails IS25, currently a grade 7 through grade 9, becoming a grade 6 through grade 8 school.

Whereas, many 6th grade students at PS 159, District 26, are currently designated to attend 7th, 8th, and 9th grade at IS25.

Whereas, the proposed change to Intermediate School 25's grades will require those students at PS 159, currently designated to attend Intermediate School 25, to attend IS25 for the 6th grade instead of attending PS 159 for 6th grade.

Whereas, a public hearing was conducted by the Community District Education Council 26 regarding this proposal and, many members of the PS159 community attended and spoke out against the proposal.

Whereas, no member of the PS159 community spoke in favor of the proposal.

Whereas, issues regarding the proposal were discussed at the Public Hearing, including the resolution passed by District 26 Presidents' Council to endorse a proposal allowing P.S.159 students currently zoned for I.S. 25 in District 25 to attend District 26 middle schools.

Resolution seconded by Rich Olson and passed unanimously by the council.

Public meeting ended at 8:30 p.m.

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

