

Community District Education Council District 26
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MINUTES FROM BUSINESS /CALENDER/ PUBLIC MEETINGS

Date: Thursday, November 29, 2012
Time: Business Meeting - 7:00 P.M.; Calendar 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 Jeannette Segal, President at 7:10 p.m.

Roll Call - Ricky Chan, Michelle Fields (late), Daniel O'Gallagher, Jeannette Segal, Susan Shiroma & Pankaj Kapur (late)

Excused – Lucy Vieco

Also in attendance: Lori Stein-Butera, District Family Advocate & Anita Saunders, Community Superintendent.

Visitors - CW Post graduate students studying educational administration.

Business meeting – no quorum-tabled

Public Meeting

At 7:30 pm the public speakers proceeded with their remarks.

Parent issues over MS 67 uniform policy. MS 67 is only school in District 26 that adapted an official uniform policy where parents are required to send their children to school dressed in specified attire.

Parent Jill Tolchin from MS 67 described current events at MS 67 concerning the school's dress code policy and requested that the CDEC look into MS 67's dress code policy to ensure that students were not being harassed or otherwise unduly penalized for not wearing attire approved by the Principal. Ms. Tolchin wants CDEC to stop children from being pulled out of class for wearing "hoodies." She also voiced concern that the MS 67 learning surveys were going to be negative this year due to parent reaction over the uniform policy.

As a parent, Ms. Tolchin is concerned that the school has created a hostile environment for the children and that the implementation of the dress code may be in violation of Chancellors Regulation A665. Ms. Tolchin stated that the Dean of Discipline was going into classes and removing children from the classroom for wearing sweatshirts with hoods attached to them. She stated some children have been threatened with suspension, and she was particularly concerned that children who were removed from class were hurt because they lost instructional time. A side concern regarding the Discipline Dean was that Ms. Dobbs was a math teacher whose time is now being appropriated to school discipline matters.

A second MS 67 parent in attendance stated her family opted out of MS 67's uniform policy (dress code). Her understanding was her child was exempt from the uniform policy. However, her child was removed from the classroom on three occasions for wearing a hoody to school.

One of the MS 67 parents in attendance cited an example of a female student who was asked to remove her sweatshirt in class in front of other students. The parent attendees stated the school's uniform policy is not being properly applied.

The Superintendent stated 100 out of the 900 MS 67 student families opted out of the uniform policy. Ms. Saunders asked Ms. Tolchin if Ms. Tolchin had met with the school's Principal regarding her parent concerns. Ms. Tolchin stated the school's principal does not return her phone calls.

President of the CDEC reviewed elements of the MS 67 time line in disseminating information about the uniform policy, and reminded the audience that the SLT voted for the dress code, but did not review details of the dress code or the implementation.

There was one PTA meeting where the agenda listed a "uniform presentation" and robo calls were given to parents. The parents in attendance at this PTA meeting voted to adopt a uniform policy. The school sent out a certified letter and a non-certified letter to parents about the "uniform policy" but these letters made no mention of hoodies. It was also stated that in September 2012 the PTA held a meeting where "droves of parents" came to discuss the uniform policy, but clothes were not on the agenda. It was stated the school's Principal walked out of this meeting.

One parent stated the school's current PTA executive board supports the school's uniform policy and the now graduated last year's PTA President was the person who "pushed" this policy through the SLT.

CDEC President will address this issue by writing a letter to the school's Principal and cc: the Superintendent.

P.S. 173 lack of funding for electrical upgrade to classrooms and air conditioning needs for school auditorium:

PTA President Allan Ong and James Gallagher, President of Fresh Meadows Home Owners Association appeared on behalf of P.S. 173 community to request CDEC's assistance in helping the school work with SCA and NYC City Council to get funding for electrical upgrades and air conditioning.

Mr. Ong stated the school has a growing number of children with allergies and asthma and due to a lack of air conditioning, particularly in the auditorium, these environmental issues negatively affect the children. The PTA has fundraised for smart boards but because the classrooms do not have the electrical capacity to run a smart board AND air conditioning unit at the same time, the teachers have to choose between using a smart board or using an air conditioner.

Parents and community leaders wondered whether Councilman Gennaro could assist P.S. 173 in this matter. CDEC reviewed a listing of its recommendations and rankings of SCA requests.

Possible closures of MS 216, MS 158 and MS 172's Beacon Programs:

Jim Gallagher, President of Fresh Meadows Home Owners Civic reminded CDEC that these Beacon Programs may be closed due to city budget cuts and a possible re-organization of the Beacon Program system by DYCD. He further reminded CDEC that Beacons provide free recreational and community programming for adults and youth in the entire community.

P.S. 173 dual language program: Concern that P.S. 173 students will not have access to dual language programming at a District 26 middle school:

The Mandarin-English dual language program at P.S. 173 is lauded as a wonderful program by educators, parents and the community. P.S. 173 has successfully been running this program for five years. Classroom instruction is in Mandarin and English. Student participants represent all nationalities.

Boyd Tembo, co-PTA President P.S.173 and former PTA President of MS 216, stated there is concern at P.S. 173 that after students graduate in 5th grade, there will be no middle school dual language program in the district for them to continue their dual language skills.

Superintendent Saunders was happy to report that there is a plan to move this program to 6th grade in a local District 26 middle school.

C.W. Post Professor thanks District 26 for our educational leadership:

Professor Thomas Bowman from C.W. Post University thanked Superintendent Saunders and District 26 community for our close relationship with C.W. Post students. He thanked us for our District leadership and reminded the audience that leadership is key to education and made reference to the evening's discussions as demonstrating to the C.W. Post students in attendance what good communication in a school community is all about.

At 8:47pm the Superintendent made remarks concerning the Superintendent's Report portion of the agenda

See attached report from Superintendent's office for list of schools affected by Hurricane Sandy and for list of District 26 awards and honors. Report lists changes to NYC DOE school calendar re mid-winter recess and June.

Additional remarks by Superintendent:

Bell Park community & M.S. 172

Superintendent received a phone call from Sandy Ferguson, D.O.E. regarding Bell Park Community and middle school placement of P.S. 18 Students. Apparently, D.O.E. was contacted by City Councilman Mark Weprin about an issue of concern to the Bell Park (condominium) community, whose children attend P.S. 18. The community is zoned for one middle school, but based on a letter dating back to 1993, M.S. 172 accepts children from Bell Park. CDEC was alerted this might be a future re-zoning issue for us to consider.

Office of School Enrollment concern over P.S./I.S. 266 lottery

Sandy Ferguson, Office of School Enrollment, has contacted the District Office with concerns over the new Chancellor's Regulation A101. It requires every lottery school with a kindergarten to follow the same computer system for lotteries. Office of School Enrollment wants P.S. 266 to now use their DOE computer system for the 2013 lottery process. Due to the specific enrollment requirements of the three schools on the Frank Padavan Campus, P.S. 266 (one of the two K-8 schools on this campus) has always handled its own K-8 lottery procedures for District 26. The current lottery reserves 25 seats at P.S. 266 for siblings and places 50 other seats into the lottery.

Superintendent's Report **CDEC Meeting** **November 29, 2012** **9:00 A.M.** **AGENDA**

- Welcome
- Hurricane Sandy
 - Schools Affected :
PS 94, 98, 115, 162, 173, 178, 188
 - Relocated Students to District 26
- Wellness Awards (attachment)
MS 74
PS/IS 266
- National Blue Ribbon Ceremony
 - PS 203 – November 29th – Morning
 - PS 191 – November 29th – Evening
- Blue Ribbon Award Potential Nominee for 2013, PS 221 – based on Grade 3-5 ELA and Math assessments under category of “Exemplary High Performing Schools.” Twenty-five schools initially selected and nineteen will be chosen to apply. PS 221 must complete an application.
- New Calendar – schools in session February 20th (Wednesday), 21st (Thursday) and 22nd (Friday). Full day session June 4, 2013, previously clerical half day.

Quote:

“In times of change, learners inherit the earth; while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.”

Eric Hoffer, American Social Writer

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Office of School Enrollment concern over P.S./I.S. 266 lottery

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Meeting adjourned by unanimous vote
Minutes submitted by Susan Shiroma