

Community Education Council District 26

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MINUTES OF BUSINESS & CALENDAR PUBLIC MEETINGS

Date: Thursday, February 17, 2005

Time: Business Meeting, 7:00 P.M.; Calendar Meeting, 8:25 P.M.

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

The meeting of the Community Education Council of District 26 (CEC26) was called to order and chaired by Sandra Gonzales, 1st Vice President of CEC26 at 7:00 PM EST.

Roll Call: Rob Caloras, Xiang Lan Cho, Melissa Dorfman, Mona Fabricant, Sandra Gonzales, Jacqueline Montgomery, Rich Olson, John Padden.

Member arriving late: Yen Shia Chou. Absent with notice: Susan Downey, Bona Sun.

Anita Saunders, Community Superintendent, Lori Stein-Butera, Parent Support Officer and Dorette Postelnik, Region 3 Budget Team Leader, also attended.

Sandra Gonzales presented her opening remarks. Topics covered included:

1. DCEP Workshop sponsored by DOE.
2. Notes of Helen Marshall's State of the Boro address. (See attached notes.)
3. Reminder to Council members to submit their Activity Sheets for January.
4. Application forms are now available for nominations for this year's CEC elections.

Anita Saunders presented the Superintendent's Report. Please see the attached handout.

Lori Stein-Butera described several initiatives underway in District 26 to encourage further parent participation. These include:

1. The 2005 CEC campaign: Brochures have been distributed. See the attached "Parents & Pancakes" notice. Nominees for CEC positions will be able to participate in two forums, one sponsored by the DOE, the other by the Presidents' Council.
2. Region 3 Spring Parent Conferences: These will feature workshops, academic assistance and recreation. The conferences are for parents only, no children.
3. Lobby Day, March 22, 2005: Buses will leave MS 74 at 6:30 AM. Participants will gather in Albany at 9:30 AM. The day will feature pre-arranged meetings with elected officials. Buses will return to the District at about 7:00 PM.

In response to a question from Rob Caloras, Anita Saunders indicated that existing curriculum exceptions for schools in District 26 would stay in effect in the next academic year. However, schools newly opening in the District next year must use the standard curriculum. No exceptions will be granted for new schools.



The Council addressed unfinished business. Melissa Dorfman presented the report from the Committee Regarding Special Recognition & Celebrations. Please see the attached report. The Council discussed the report. Mona Fabricant suggested the Council send a letter to teachers who pass the National Teacher's Exam. Mona indicated the roster of teachers newly passing this exam could be obtained from the District office. Jacqueline Montgomery made a motion to invite and recognize the following individuals at the Council's upcoming meetings: Newly designated Principals at the March meeting, newly designated Assistant Principals at the April meeting and Presidents Council Co-Presidents Gail Cohen and Dave Pinzon at the May meeting. Mona Fabricant seconded the motion which then was passed unanimously (8 Yes, 0 No. Yen Shia Chou was not present for this vote.)

The Council took up new business. Rob Caloras described the current status of PS 130 as part of District 25, its earlier status as part of District 26 and asked the Council to consider supporting a call for the DOE and Region 3 to once again make PS 130 a District 26 school. Rob then introduced Mr. Melvin Meer, a member of the Education Committee of Community Board 11 and a proponent of returning PS 130 to District 26.

Mr. Meer explained that the CB11 Education Committee was formed to preserve non-parent community input to the DOE and CEC26. Mr. Meer's presentation included the following points in support of redistricting PS 130:

1. The inability of local residents to use PS 130 adversely impacts real estate values in the vicinity of the school because children living close to the school are now bused to other District 26 schools.
2. Busing children living close to PS 130 is expensive. Mr. Meer suggested that by redistricting PS 130 the need for busing would be reduced and busing-related expenses could be reduced, leading to possible savings of approximately one million dollars.

Mr. Meer described a transition in which no current PS 130 children need be displaced as a result of redistricting. District 26 children could be assigned to the school over time as new classes are formed to replace those advancing to the next grade.

Next, Mr. Jack Friedman presented the Council with his analysis of the possible impact of redistricting PS 130. Mr. Friedman's presentation included the following points:

1. No redistricting is needed. District 26 children living close to PS 130 can be reassigned to PS 130 without redistricting the school.
2. There are not enough children living in the immediate vicinity of PS 130 to fill the school. Children now attending other District 26 schools nearby might not be the best candidates for transfer to PS 130. For example, many of the children now attending PS 31 live across the Expressway from PS 130. Reassigning them to PS 130 would pose a new traffic safety risk. Children would still need to be bused to PS 130 to fill the school. Redistricting PS 130 would not necessarily reduce busing expenses.

Anita Saunders suggested the Council could obtain more information from Judith Chin and her staff on the DOE process for evaluating redistricting proposals.



Mrs. Sharon Maurer, a former District 26 School Board member alerted the Council that any children sent from District 26 to attend a District 25 school would be “lost” to District 26. Such reassignment would reduce the count of District 26 children and adversely impact any District 26 funding calculated on the basis of District 26 student enrollment or attendance. Mrs. Maurer drew the Council’s attention to declining parochial school enrollments and suggested the Council consider initiatives that might allow District 26 to use decommissioned parochial school facilities in the District 26 area.

The consensus of the Council members present was to contact Judith Chin and ask that Region 3 staff investigate in more depth the probable impact of any proposed redistricting of PS 130 and inform CEC26 of their findings.

Sandra Gonzales reminded the Council of its upcoming responsibility to evaluate the recent performance of the District 26 Community Superintendent.

Jacqueline Montgomery presented her proposal that the Council assign 2-4 District 26 schools to each Council member. Council members would ask school Principals for invitations to attend School Leadership Team meetings at their assigned schools with the objective of building CEC26 relationships with the Teams and their schools.

Rich Olson made a motion to adjourn the business meeting. Jacqueline Montgomery seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (9 Yes, 0 No). The business meeting ended at 8:15 PM EST.



PUBLIC MEETING

Sandra Gonzales called the CEC26 Calendar Public Meeting to order at 8:25 PM EST on February 17, 2005 and led all present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Anita Saunders presented the Superintendent's Report. Please see the attached handout. Anita reported that MS 158 was adopting an Army Reserve unit stationed in Iraq. On February 14, many District 26 children celebrated the day by making little paper hearts and attaching them to larger school hearts on display. Anita also reported that District 26 children are gaining proficiency in test sophistication. This is not the same as test preparation. As part of this effort children are learning to scan questions before reading them and to pay particular attention to reading test directions before beginning to answer questions.

Sandra Gonzales invited those present who had signed the Speakers List to address the Council.

Presidents Council (PC) Co-President Gail Cohen reminded the CEC26 of its obligation to meet at least quarterly with District 26 PTA Executive Boards and separately with the Presidents Council.

Anita Saunders thanked Dorette Postelnik, Region 3 Budget Team Leader, for attending the CEC26 meeting. (The Budget Team works with Principals in the Region in preparing school budgets.)

Mona Fabricant made a motion to close the calendar public meeting. Jacqueline Montgomery seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously, 9 Yes, 0 No.

The calendar public meeting ended at 8:45 PM EST.

Respectfully submitted by John Padden, Recording Secretary, CEC26.

