

The following was passed on March 29, 2007 by the Community District Education Council 26.  
COMMUNITY DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL 26 RESOLUTION

To Postpone Department of Education's Children First Restructuring and Fair Student Funding Plan

Pursuant to New York State Education Law Section 2590-e subsection 14, Community District Education Council 26 has held public meetings and forums and its members have attended meetings and forums on the Department of Education's Children First Restructuring and Fair Student Funding Plan, during which information was obtained and members of the public spoke and expressed their concerns. Pursuant to New York State Education Law Section 2590-e subsection 18, Community District Education Council 26 deems it necessary to advise the Chancellor and the City Board on the following matters:

WHEREAS, having considered and reviewed the Department of Education's Children First restructuring and Fair Student Funding Plan;

WHEREAS, both focus on extensive programmatic and structural changes, and overlook the proven initiative that improves the quality of education, smaller class size;

WHEREAS, our schools and classrooms are severely overcrowded and our children's capacity for learning is suffering from this situation;

WHEREAS, for many middle and high school teachers, given their huge class sizes (within contract limits) and teaching loads, just spending 5 minutes out of class conferring with each student, and another five minutes correcting his or her weekly homework would take an additional 40 hours per week;

WHEREAS, the Department of Education has just contracted with IBM for \$80 million to produce a new computer system designed to help teachers individualize instruction to meet the needs of each student, however, with the current class sizes of 30 or more in many schools, and teaching loads of 150-180 students, this system and any system created to properly assess our students will be impossible to implement;

WHEREAS, reducing class size makes a big difference in a child's education in many ways, including giving students more time to interact with their teachers;

WHEREAS, the proposed programmatic and structural changes to the school system will not be beneficial unless class sizes are reduced;

WHEREAS, Empowerment Schools are less than one year old and have not been fully evaluated regarding their effect on students learning and academic achievement and principals accountability;

WHEREAS, though the Department of Education claims that many principals of Empowerment Schools used their additional funding and flexibility to hire extra teachers to reduce class size, many principals reported that they were simply sent more students by Tweed as a result, effectively eliminating any reduction in class size;

WHEREAS, the Department of Education has admitted this may have occurred in many instances, and yet refuses to promise that it will not happen again;

WHEREAS, restructuring of the entire school system, after the restructuring of 2003, will once again destabilize and impose hardship

on students, parents, teachers, and administrators trying to obtain services; which did happen in 2003;

WHEREAS, despite claims to the contrary, there is no independent evidence that in the last round of reorganization, \$200 million was ever redirected directly into the classroom;

WHEREAS, the reorganization proposals place emphasis on a principals management skill at the expense of a principals pedagogical skills;

WHEREAS, many material details of the proposed restructuring plan are still being determined;

WHEREAS, weighted student funding, as constituted in this plan, will create competition for scarce resources in the schools such that schools will have an incentive to hire lower-paid, inexperienced teachers and that other implications of the plan for schools' budgets are not clearly spelled out;

WHEREAS, to have more effective and experienced teachers, the best way to do so is to improve the classroom learning environment and reducing class size and improving instruction are the most effective methods to do so;

WHEREAS, according to the Educational Priorities Panel, a smaller percentage of the overall Department of Education budget has gone to instruction each year;

WHEREAS, the headcount and salaries of Department of Education employees and consultants has grown substantially, and continues to grow, with a projected increase of 12% in spending for Department of Education staff next year;

WHEREAS, there is no evidence that any school system that has adopted weighted funding has made significant progress in student achievement;

WHEREAS, the Department of Education's Children First Restructuring and Fair Student Funding Plans were created without any meaningful participation by parents, guardians, or teachers;

Therefore, be it RESOLVED that the Community District Education Council 26 rejects the Department of Education's Children First Restructuring and Fair Student Funding Plan and calls upon the Mayor and the Chancellor to postpone implementation of this plan and immediately call public hearings on the priorities for education spending and restructuring of the New York City Public Schools.

DATED: March 29, 2007