

Community District Education Council District 26

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MINUTES OF BUSINESS & CALENDAR PUBLIC MEETINGS

Date: Thursday, May 26, 2011

Time: Business Meeting-7:00 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 Rob Caloras, President at 7:25 pm.

Roll Call: Rob Caloras, Dina Quondamatteo, Ricky Chan, Susan Shiroma, Pia Alexander, Xiao Mei Ge & Ismael Fuentes

Excused– Irene Fennell - Jeannette Segal

Also in attendance were Anita Saunders, Community Superintendent & Lori Butera, and District Family Advocate

Business Meeting

1. Minutes – Rob asked the council had they had an opportunity to read/review the March 24th and April 28th minutes. Ismael Fuentes made a motion to accept the March 24th & April 28th minutes and Ricky seconded. Council agreed unanimously to accept the minutes.

2. President's Report – Robert Caloras

a. Rob thanked UFT, CSA and parents of D26 for a wonderful and successful dinner. Scholarship winners and memorials for three students who died and they were from PS 221. Rob was also given an award at the dinner from the UFT.

b. Rob mentioned two newspaper articles:

1. NYT – school in Conn. (upper middle class area) where they discuss the AP classes (history) where they talk to the teacher. The teacher stated that “year to year 50% -85% of the students have passed the exam. He cannot explain the difference since he is teaching the same way maybe it’s the students or the exam he is not sure. There is a wide unexplained variation in test scores.

2. The second article, titled "Test for Pupils but the Grade Goes to Teachers" discusses the NYC DOE emphasis on creating more and more standardized tests for students in order to evaluate teachers instead of working to create other methods of measuring teacher performance.

Rob distributed and proposed a resolution in response to a recent DOE trend in creating more and more standardized tests for students as a method of evaluating the teachers. Rob encouraged public attendees to spread the word to hopefully influence policy.

Rob stated that he did a draft of a resolution and copies given to all attendees.

**COMMUNITY DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL 26 RESOLUTION
CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S PLAN TO HAVE STUDENTS TAKE ADDITIONAL TESTS AS
PART OF TEACHER EVALUATION**

WHEREAS, New York City Public Schools Students in grades three and higher take yearly standardized tests in English and Math, and every few years take standardized tests in Science and Social Studies. These students also take many assessment tests in these areas. These tests and assessments have been utilized to determine promotions and the quality of schools. For many years, CDEC 26 has voiced concerns that there has been an excessive use of standardized tests, these tests are inappropriately utilized and this has resulted in students spending an inordinate amount of time doing test preparation, curriculums have been altered to better enable students to score well on the tests and students and schools are inaccurately evaluated. These concerns reflected the consensus of the vast majority of parents, students, and teachers in our education community.

WHEREAS, The New York City Department of Education ("DOE") has steadfastly refused to address these concerns and instead insists upon expanding the uses and reliance on these tests.

WHEREAS, New York State has recently won \$700 million in a federal grant competition, known as Race to the Top, and each New York State school district must find a way to evaluate teachers on a scale from "ineffective" to "highly effective," with teachers facing potential firing if they are rated ineffective for two years in a row.

WHEREAS, under a law passed last year that helped the state win the grant, 40 percent of a teacher's grade will be based on standardized tests or other "rigorous, comparable" measures of student performance. Half of that should be based on state tests, and half on measures selected by local districts. The remaining 60 percent is to be based on more subjective measures, including principal observation

WHEREAS, New York State law allows local school districts to set academic goals for teachers, instead of creating standardized tests. Consequently, most New York State School districts will not create their own standardized tests, due to the expense and difficulty in preparing effective evaluation tests.

WHEREAS, The DOE plans on creating as many as 16 new standardized tests in the 3rd through 12th grades to evaluate teachers. This will require students take at least one or two additional standardized tests each year. These tests will cost almost \$65 million dollars, which represents almost one-quarter of the money it is receiving from the federal grant.

WHEREAS, these tests will be used to evaluate teachers, there is a high probability that ensuring high test results will become a primary concern of teachers. Such can only result in students spending additional time preparing for these tests, instead of being exposed to activities and instruction that are designed to enrich their learning experience.

WHEREAS, The test preparation will consist of learning particular skills likely to be on the test, students' understanding of a subject will be limited and unlikely to help them develop into truly educated people capable of succeeding in society, economically, socially, and emotionally. Moreover, the preparation results in test scores that do not reflect a students' ability. This concern was expressed by the New York State Department of Education, last year, and resulted in the DOE having to change many aspects of its testing policies.

WHEREAS, standardized tests are designed to differentiate levels of understanding between students, they are incapable of accurately measuring a teacher's effectiveness.

WHEREAS, all students are continuously evaluated in their math, science, English, and social studies course work by means of weekly and quarterly quizzes and tests designed by their teachers.

WHEREAS, reviewing results on and the content of these weekly and quarterly tests would be a strong indicator of a student's understanding of course work and the teacher's ability to teach.

Be it Resolved, CDEC26 condemns the creation of additional standardized tests to evaluate teachers as an unnecessary use of learning time and money. To administer more standardized tests to students is in our children's worst interest. Rather, the DOE should set academic goals for teachers that better measure their abilities to be effective educators by utilizing existing testing procedures.

Floor opened for discussion. There was no discussion.

Dina made a motion to accept the resolution as is, Ismael seconded and council members voted unanimously to accept the resolution and send out.

3. Budget – Ricky Chan

No changes in budget

Old Business

1. April 28th Ballroom dancing was discussed as well as Assistant Principal and Principal honorees were mentioned.
2. Council Recording Secretary Pia Alexander asked a question regarding the budget that was presented by District Superintendent Anita Saunders at the meeting. Anita responded that the budget presented was an overall budget for NYC and not specific to D26, in addition, no funds were restored to our District

New Business

CEC elections were discussed and new selection date was discussed by Linda Courtney, attendee and Pres. Council President. Pia Alexander mentioned a possible candidate for the council and the trend that many parent leaders unhappy with the CEC selection process are waiting to fill vacancies in September when candidates can apply and speak during CEC meetings to council members and attendees about their qualifications.

Superintendent's Report

CDEC Meeting
Thursday, May 26, 2011
MS 67

- Welcome
- Principal Retirements:
 - Shelley Steppel, PS 133
 - Marlene Zucker, PS 159
 - Sheelia Twomey, PS 221
- Job Posting – June 1 – 15
- New Principal – PS 162 – Joan Casale
- Quality Review
 - PS/IS 178 – June 1 & 2
- Promotional Policy –no change
 - June – Preliminary ELA/ Math scores
 - Summer – Final ELA & Math scores
- Summer School Sites – PS 46 and MS 172
- Kindergarten Registration – PS 162 overflow students (8)-Parents offered PS 31
- Teacher Lay-offs (approx 4000)
- District 26 Accountability Overview and Data Profile – Hand-out
- DOE Changes
 - Dorita Gibson – Deputy Chancellor for Equity & Access
 - Donald Conyers – Supervisor of Superintendents
- Chancellor's Principal Conference – Saturday, June 4, 2011
- Instructional Priorities – 2011-2012

Ms. Saunder's discussed teacher layoffs and school progress reports. All elementary and middle schools in D26 are in good standing. Only HS do not meet annual yearly progress (AYP) in ELL's and students with disabilities (SWD). This can partially be attributed to the open choice in the HS's which are not strictly students in District 26.

Rob brought up the subject of the ESL requirement stating that after one year the student would be tested, is there any way to change that ruling? Rob wants to know is any effort being made such as the Mayor and elected officials.

Anita stated that the January regents will be cancelled and will be given in June.

Dina made a motion to adjourn, Ismael seconded. Council voted unanimously.
Meeting adjourned 7:50 p.m.

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P U B L I C M E E T I N G

Public meeting called to order 8:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Rob Caloras, Dina Quondamatteo, Ricky Chan, Susan Shiroma, Pia Alexander, Xiao Mei Ge & Ismael Fuentes

Excused– Irene Fennell - Jeannette Segal

Also in attendance were Anita Saunders, Community Superintendent & Lori Butera, and District Family Advocate

Rob informed the attendees that we have Rich Bockmann from the Times Ledger and if he asks any questions, to please answer.

Introduced Mary Vaccaro, UFT Rep who stated that there will be a Town Hall Meeting on June 2nd with Councilman Mark Weprin regarding layoffs – Dan Halloran’s Town Hall Meeting taking place June 3rd in regard to teacher layoffs.

Representative from Mark Weprin’s office spoke about summer applications for ages 6-12 years first come first serve basis.

Speakers List

1. Michele Cespedes – parent of PS 188 – spoke about the Gifted & Talented program at the schools. Has an issue with it turning citywide.

Rob introduced our Guest Speakers from the DOE:

Amanda Cahn & Rebecca Rawlins, Directors of Portfolio Planning; Grace Gonzalez, Lead rep for the Gifted & Talented program.

Rob reiterated the meeting that took place in January regarding the G&T program.

Amanda Cahn proceeded to inform the attendees of the citywide program that took place in Astoria and was told by the Queens community that it was not accessible.

District wide students test at 90% or higher to qualify for a district wide program is for students **within** that district.

Students who test at 97% qualify for a citywide program and are **available** for all students within that district.

Amanda outlined that in looking for a school and few things are looked at, such as:

Quality of the school

Established program in the school

Location centrally

Space

Started looking at PS 188 and approached the principal and the SLT. Suggested meeting with the community and other groups within the school. Looking to place a citywide program in the District by 2012 or not.

Rob reiterated that meetings took place in the past eight years where discussions of a citywide program were mentioned and it was relatively positive to bring a citywide program to the district.

All the other concerns were not discussed but as a general matter, bringing a citywide gifted and talented program to the district would be beneficial to the district as well as those in eastern Queens.

Amanda would like to hear from parents of both sides.

Amanda spoke about how students were selected relating to their scores. There is a need and demand for a first grade at PS 18, so there will be a 1st grade class opening at PS 18 in September.

DOE looking at the kindergarten demands.

Grace Gonzalez stated there is no difference in the curriculum for the gifted & talented. It depends on the students needs. Grace stated that there is no additional fund for the gifted & talented and that fund raising enhances the school. There is no extra funding for anyone, the G&T child and the general Ed child equal the same amount of money that is allocated to a school, it's per child.

Amanda Cahn also spoke about class size.

Amanda stated that all districts were considered.

Amanda Cahn will work with the CDEC to inform the community of any changes taking place regarding PS 188, PS 18 and the Gifted & Talented program.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

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