

Community District Education Council District 26
Address: 61-15 Oceania St, Bayside, New York 11364
Tel: 718.631.6927 **FAX:** 718.631.6996 **Email:** central/cec26@nycboe.net

MINUTES FROM BUSINESS /CALENDER/ PUBLIC MEETINGS

Date: Thursday, November 21, 2013

Time: Public Meeting - 7:00 P.M. - Business Meeting -TO FOLLOW

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 Ricky Chan, 1st Vice President at 7:10 p.m.

Roll Call - Jeannette Segal, Susan Shiroma (Borough Appointee), Lucy Vieco, Leslie Rubenstein, Alan Ong (Borough Appointee), Ricky Chan, Jaya Patil & Anastasio Politidis
 Excused – Jaime Alvarez-Isasi

Also present: Lori Stein-Butera, District Family Advocate & Anita Saunders, Community Superintendent

Ricky Chan introduced some of the representatives from the School Construction Authority (SCA) (Kathleen Grimm, Mary Leas, Gordon Tong & Kendrick Ou). Ms. Monica Gutierrez, SCA presented a PowerPoint presentation (ATTACHED) on the Proposed Five Year Capital Plan FY 2015-2019.

Ms. Gutierrez started with:

An overview 2003-2013
 Proposed 2015-2019
 Capital Plan Highlights

ACCOMPLISHMENTS
 CITYWIDE

- Opened 164 new buildings, leases, and additions
- Created over 126,000 new capacity seats
- Completed over 6,000 capital investment projects

2003-2013
 SUMMARY
 District 26

- Capacity
 1,611 Seats
- Capital Improvement Projects
 212 Capital Improvement Projects totaling more than \$274 million
- Resolution A
 82 Reso A projects totaling more than \$14.5 million

NEW SCHOOL – GLEN OAKS CAMPUS – PS IS 266 – OPENED 2003

NEW SCHOOL ADDITIONS – PS 94 ANNEX – OPENED 2007
 PS 188 ANNEX – OPENED 2009

Nov. 21, 2013 mins.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT – PS 41 – EXTERIOR MASONRY
 PS 46 – ELECTRICAL UPGRADE
 PS 162 – AUDITORIUM UPGRADE
 PS 173 – PLAYGROUND & TCU REMOVAL

RESOLUTION A (RESO A) PROJECTS

Resolution A (RESO A)

Projects are school specific capital improvement or enhancement projects that are funded by individual grants, the New York City Council or Borough residents Office.

PS 188 ANNEX – OUT 2 PLAY PLAYGROUND
 PS 46 – SMART TABLE

PROPOSED FY 2015-2019 PLAN

Continues comparable level of investment

	4 TH PLAN 2005-2009	5 TH PLAN 2010-2014	6 TH PLAN 2014-2019 (PROPOSED)
Total Spending	\$13.2B	\$11.2B	\$12.0B

FY 2015 – 2019 Five Year Capital Plan
 Proposed Funding

Capacity Program	\$3.9 billion
Capital Investments	\$4.6 billion
Mandated Programs	\$3.5 billion
Total	\$12.0 billion

Proposed Five Year Plan FY 2015-2019

Capacity Program

District 26 Seat Need – Funded: 912

Project/Building Name	Number of Seats	Neighborhood
Not Sited		
Project #1	456	Bayside, Auburndale
Project #2	456	Oakland Gardens, Fresh Meadows
TOTAL	912	

Proposed Five Year Plan FY 2015-2019

Capacity Program

District 26

Additional Identified Seat Need – Unfunded: 184

Sub-District	Number of Seats	Comments
Not Sited		
Oakland Gardens, Fresh Meadows	184	Additional Need
TOTAL	184	

Nov. 21, 2013 mins.

**PROPOSED FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PLAN
Capital Improvement and Mandated Projects
FY 2015-2016
District 26**

Program Category	# of Projects	(in Millions)
Boiler Conversion	4	\$18.00
Climate Control	4	\$4.80
Low-Voltage Electrical Systems	1	\$1.50
Lighting Fixtures	9	\$13.50
Reinforcing Cinder Concrete Slabs	1	\$1.44
Roofs	1	\$2.12
Paved Area-Blacktop	2	\$1.18
Auditorium Upgrade	3	\$3.16
Parapets	1	\$2.53
Windows	1	\$5.29
Exterior Masonry	2	\$6.49
Total:	29	\$60.01

Ms. Gutierrez stated that the SCA has a court mandate for light fixtures. Projects have started and must be finished by 2016.

WHOM TO CONTACT

**CEC Building Comment Form information:
718-472-8709
Email: council@nycsca.org
To suggest sites email details to:
sites@nycsca.org
For more information visit the SCA online at:
www.nycsca.org**

Jeanette thanked Ms. Gutierrez for her presentation and thanked the other SCA representatives for being there.

Questions & Answer Session

Q – The need for a High School due to overcrowding and asked about the Leviton site.

A - Monica stated that the location is not suitable. It's on the Nassau County border and that transportation was an issue.

Mary Lease Director of External Affairs for SCA- said the site is remote for the rest of the borough and they need a site to be available for D25 and hope for something closer to the city.

Ms. Leas said "it's hard to site a HS because communities don't like it." For a HS you need over 1 acre with 15,000 sq. ft.

An audience member from D11 stated that the site has been leased.

Q - Needs from principals is infrastructure – they are not able to support the technology.

A - Ms. Grimm stated that an internet upgrade will be done by the end of January for all schools. Recommended we request the electrical upgrade if they are our priorities. They are working with schools to see what electricity is being used and some schools are removing microwaves and refrigerators to conserve electricity.

Marian - 7 schools have Capital Plan projects and the rest are Reso.

Nov. 21, 2013 mins.

Q - Will assessments be electronic?

A - Ms. Grimm stated that schools will need the internet access but feels online testing will not be here soon but is coming. They will work towards getting ready.

Gregory Bracco (Director-DSF) commented that when the schools were built the need was 1/10 of what it is today. ConED may not be able to bring the feeders into some neighborhoods.

Anita Saunders (Community Superintendent) commented that Verizon is an issue with the underground wires.

Q - How can parents can get involved with SCA?

A – Greg stated that parents need to work with SCA first before buying anything to ensure power is sufficient.

Ms. Gutierrez reiterated that A/C is not eligible for capital monies.

Ms. Grimm wants to know what D26's priorities are and they will be reviewed by SCA and the Division of School Facilities & Office of Space Planning. They are seeing the need across many districts for bathroom upgrades. The SCA is starting a pilot project to fix bathrooms which will be less expensive (re-tiling – sinks – paint).

Q- Is there any consideration for solar panels?

A - Ms. Grimm informed the attendees that they are doing things like green roofs. She stated that there is a school in Staten Island & there is one school in the city using solar panels. Solar panels are very expensive

Q- How do parents initiate with CSF?

A – Greg Bracco (DSF) said they can provide an amount/estimate the projects will cost.

Q - What is Reso A?

A – Monica stated that a Reso is a grant by City Councilman or Borough President. It comes from the city budget and has to do with participatory budgeting.

Council member Mr. Politis brought up safety issues at PS 159 (lights out in halls & stairways- replacement of PCB lights). Mr. Thomas Keaney (DSF) stated that he will have someone out at the school tomorrow.

Q- About seats available to D26 and Keil site.

A – Monica said that the design hasn't started but it will probably be about 3 years before first admission.

Q – Will the first class be PreK or K?

A- Monica - depending on the issues, the DOE and Supt will look at phase in approach or other enrollment pattern in first year.

Q - Project 2 - is that High school?

A - Monica: No - PreK to 5 that's funded but not sited.

Ms. Grimm reminded everyone that it is a proposed plan and that it will be re-issued in Feb to PEP, Mayor and City Council for approval in June 2014.

Q – Are the 184 seats are for elementary?

A - Monica: YES - PreK to 5

Nov. 21, 2013 mins.

Q - Where would Project 1 and 2 draw from?

A – Anita stated they are zoned schools

Speakers:

1. Ms. Toby Pagano who lives across from where the new school will be (Keil Brothers) on 48 Avenue stated that there are 51 NYC buses going up that street. She is concerned with congestion and potential dangers for public. She feels the community is opposed to the project because it is a dangerous project and disrespectful to the homeowners who will have part of the school on their property. There is congestion for the safety of the children from the Marie Currie School which was not taken into consideration.
2. Anthony Lemma (representative for Assemblyman Weprin) stated that all politicians are against it.

Ms. Grimm wants to assure all that safety precautions and impact studies are taken into consideration.

Toby said there is no parking available and the school buses block all access in and out which affects her ability to go to work.

Susan asks that the SCA go into homeowners backyards and look into this issue.

Jeannette explained the process and said we hope for the best.

Superintendent's Report

Anita Saunders, Community Superintendent

- Welcome
- Middle School Gifted Program
 - Application Process – all students currently in a 5th grade class (not necessarily a Gifted Class) may apply.

In March 2013 the DOE advised that G&T classes would not go directly to middle school as a class. Students would be placed based on scores into 5 middle schools. Principals on Nov12th attended a meeting where they were told and explained the new Middle School G&T process. D26 is not a choice district. The only choice being offered is for Middle School Gifted Magnet. Parents will receive a child specific middle school application. Students will be placed according to their 4th grade NYS ELA and Math test scores.

- AT&T – 1.6 Million to HS for computer classes
 - internships (1200 students)
 - software engineering education
 - summer enrichment Grade 9 students
 - paid summer internships
 - digital boot camp
 (STEM Project - Science Tech – Engineering Math)
- President Obama – 100 Million Initiative to Overhaul High Schools Nationwide
- Martin Van Buren – Co-location approved
 - C & T School 450 students

Nov. 21, 2013 mins.

- Grades 9-14
- QCC collaboration and college courses
- Kindergarten Registration – January 13 – February 14, 2014
Placement distributed early April
 - online using Kindergarten Connect
(www.nyc.gov/schools/kindergarten)
 - Over the phone by calling 718-935-2400
(8am-3pm, Monday – Friday)
 - In person at an Enrollment Office (30-48 Linden Place)
(8am – 3pm, Monday – Friday)

Quote: “*It is today we must create the world of the future.*”

Eleanor Roosevelt

First Lady of the United States, 1933-1945

Speakers List

1. Ms. Chen – parent of a 5th grade G&T - concerned that G&T students are losing their feed spots.

Anita stated that it's a new process. DOE wanted to make it more equitable. It's an average of ELA and Math. There are children who are not keeping up. Some parents feel those children are together for too many years.

Ms. Chen concerned about ELA scores are the criteria.

Anita stated that they will be placed in descending order.

2. Jaya Patil asked if a student is in G&T in grade 6, will they continue.

Anita informed her that a student will be moved if they cannot keep up.

3. Susan Shiroma asked will PS178 students still be zoned to their school.

Anita stated that it will be printed on the child's application

Discussion of Increasing the Administrative Assistant's Salary

Jeannette informed the council of the Resolution (Resolution #3-2013-Salary Increase for Administrative Asst.) for increasing the Administrative Assistant's Salary.

Ricky asked how much money was left over last year.

Marian informed him that \$5000-6000 was returned.

Jaya makes motion to approve the increase and Leslie seconded the motion. Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution #3-2013 – Salary Increase for Administrative Asst.

Resolution: CDEC 26 hereby increases the Annual Salary of Marian Mason, the Administrative Assistant to the Community District Education Council of District 26 using the OTPS Funds

WHEREAS, Community District Education Council members are representatives of the parents and community-at-large and are consulted on many important matters, and in turn, must consult with parents; and

WHEREAS, Community District Education Council 26 believes that it needs competent and efficient support staff to fulfill its mission of promoting achievement of educational standards and objectives, evaluating the Community District Superintendent, providing input to the Chancellor, holding public meetings and acting as liaison to schools; and

WHEREAS, Community District Education Council 26 needs a skilled administrative assistant in order to accomplish these goals; and

WHEREAS, Community District Education Council 26 believes that their current Administrative Assistant, Marian Mason is more than qualified for her position; and

Nov. 21, 2013 mins.

WHEREAS, Community District Education Council 26 has been given authority to appoint, supervise, and evaluate an administrative assistant, and

WHEREAS, Community District Education Council 26 believes that Marian Mason is doing an outstanding job, with prior years of experienced; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that in accordance with Department of Education procedures, Community District Education Council 26 hereby increases **\$3000** to the salary of Marian Mason, the Administrative Assistant to the Community District Education Council. We understand that this pay increase will cause a reduction in the Council's annual budget by an amount equal to the raise, effective **November 1st**. The recurring annual reduction of the Council's operating budget for this purpose will continue for as long as this Administrative Assistant is employed by the Council.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY by roll call vote of all members present: 8 YES; 0 NO
Passed and Adopted this 21st Day of November, 2013.

Mary Vaccaro- UFT Rep informed the attendees of the application for the scholarship dinner. Mary will send application to Marian by next week Friday. Mary deciding on whom to honor. This year the criteria for high school students have changed. Any high school student that attends a District 26 High School will be eligible and these students do not have to live in the district. The Scholarship Dinner will be held on May 22, 2014 at The Inn at New Hyde Park, costing \$70.

Lucy made a motion to adjourn the public meeting and Alan seconded. Council voted unanimously to adjourn.

BUSINESS MEETING

The meeting of the Community District Education Council of District 26 (CDEC26) was called to order by Jeannette Segal, President.

Roll Call - Jeannette Segal, Susan Shiroma (Borough Appointee), Lucy Vieco, Leslie Rubenstein, Alan Ong (Borough Appointee), Ricky Chan, Jaya Patil & Anastasio Politidis
 Excused – Jaime Alvarez-Isasi

Also present: Lori Stein-Butera, District Family Advocate & Anita Saunders, Community Superintendent

1. Minutes

Anastasio made a motion to approve the September 26th & October 30th minutes, Lucy seconded. The council voted unanimously to approve.

2. **President's Report**

1. Attended the PEP meeting to speak about MVB. Nikki Scott, a representative from the Office of New Schools would like to have the new principal of the New Early College HS come to a CDEC meeting. Lucy recommended January and to have it at MVB. Council agreed. Meeting will be scheduled for January.
2. Received a letter (see below) from Isaac Carmengiani, CEC President for D30. In collaboration we will send letter to the mayor to request reform for PEP and other considerations. Charter schools and colocations and closing request a moratorium.

Mayor-Elect DeBlasio:

We write to you today as members of this city's thirty-two Community Education Councils (CECs) and four Citywide Councils - the elected parent-representatives of New York City's public school parents created under NY State Law 2590 (e). Some of us have

Nov. 21, 2013 mins.

served only a few months, while others have served since the inception of these parent Councils almost 11 years ago with the imposition of Mayoral Control. All of us are eager to work with you and your administration for the improvement of our public education system and to have our voices – and those of our children, community members and our fellow parents – heard and considered.

Below are areas of concern related to: reform of the PEP, Networks and organizational structure, space utilization and planning, Common Core, high-stakes testing, special education, chancellor selection, and other important issues. Some of these you will control directly over during your tenure, while others will require legislative changes at the City Council and State level. All of these issues are critical to the education of our children and we urge you to support them and work with us toward their implementation.

Reform of the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP)

The implementation of Mayoral Control in 2002, and the replacement of the Board of Education with the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) were meant to streamline decision-making and increase accountability and transparency in our public schools. While decisions and policy implementation certainly have become streamlined, all major organizational decisions on space utilization, school closings, charter school co-locations, major contracts, budget priorities, testing, curriculum and the selection of a chancellor have been made by the mayor alone without consultation or meaningful input from parents or community members.

Though confident that in a new administration the voices of parents and other stakeholders will carry more weight than during the previous 12 years, we strongly urge you to support structural reform of the PEP, including staggered terms, term limits, parent representation on the PEP and coordinating PEP and CEC/Citywide Councils collaboration, when it comes up in the state legislature in 2015.

In the interim we urge you to direct the next Chancellor to actively engage with the Community Education Councils in the formation of the PEP's agenda and of shaping the recommendations that come before that body in a meaningful way.

Networks and Organizational Structure

A signature policy of the Bloomberg administration has been the elimination of geographically based school support structures (districts and regions) in favor of Networks and clusters whose organizational principles and personnel seem constantly in flux and whose responsibilities vis-à-vis the schools they support are not clearly articulated to the public. The Networks' accountability appears non-existent: although principals are in theory free to choose a different Network if the support provided is inadequate, Networks are not answerable to the communities they serve, and the lack of transparency prevents meaningful evaluation of their effectiveness. Restructuring school support away from **geography also uses resources inefficiently as personnel** spend much of their time shuttling to and from schools, while undermining cohesiveness and community at the local level as principals and staff at one school have little information about nearby schools, including feeder schools.

We recommend the elimination of networks and a return to the basic organizational structure of the community school district, as well as bolstering the local superintendents, for elementary and middle schools. For high schools, however, we recognize that a different support structure may be appropriate and that high school principals may prefer to be supported by networks, which can be more sensitive to a school's particular interests and challenges. Nonetheless, to the extent that the network structure is retained for high schools, it must operate in a transparent way, under tight supervision by the high school superintendents and with clear accountability to the community.

Space Utilization and Planning

As described by state law, CECs are required partners in space planning, utilization and development. CECs perform considerable research executing this statutorily defined function, including holding public hearings on the annual capacity plans, submitting priorities and commenting on plans, based on data from the chancellor, feedback from district schools, and our independent research and outreach. CECs are also responsible for an enhanced district report card and for liaising with school communities, both of which provide fine-grained, on-the-ground perspectives on individual school's space concerns and the space needs of the district as a whole. Despite this, currently the Office of Portfolio Planning (OPP) does nearly all space planning, with no input from CECs. OPP has been singularly unresponsive to serious engagement with CECs and the communities we serve. Joint Public Hearings on

Nov. 21, 2013 mins.

space utilization, required by law, including the closing of community schools and the co-location of charter schools or new public schools, are often as contentious as they are futile.

Part and parcel of this problem is OPP's reliance on the Blue Book, a SCA-produced guide to school space usage that in many cases fails to take into account actual use of rooms, to properly account for limitations placed by the shared spaces (e.g., location and number of bathrooms, size of cafeteria, width of stairwells, etc.) or to allow for laboratories, libraries, and specialized therapy rooms for students with special needs. The Blue Book capacity formula simply does not reflect the actuality of what happens in the schools and what students' needs are. Additionally, the formula underestimates basic per pupil space needs and is based on an instructional footprint that allows for 25 first graders to be packed into a 500 square foot room. Despite what the footprint allows in terms of cluster rooms, when a school is co-located, cluster rooms are converted to classrooms, which are then included in the capacity calculation, changing the capacity of the school and ensuring that the cluster room is permanently lost. Additionally, the number of cluster rooms allocated per school is too few, resulting in students receiving mandated services in spaces that are inappropriate. Finally, many schools in NYC also use "transportable" classrooms, or trailers, to educate students, a practice which is a clear indicator of poor space and enrollment planning.

We recommend that the Office of Portfolio Planning be reorganized, instituting broad-based changes including the inclusion of parents into the review and planning phases. Such an office will integrate input of the affected communities and engage in meaningful decision making reflective of the many needs within our school communities while reporting back to a Central Planning Committee.

We further recommend that the Blue Book formula be completely revamped and reviewed with a working group, including CEC members and parents and that, in the future, this review panel be reconvened every four years. We recommend that the space usage designations in the Blue Book take into account not just the bare minimum of space a school needs, but the programs that each school actually does – or should be able to – offer, including all state-mandated programs such as physical education, art, dance and music, as well as computer and technology programs.

We further recommend that the footprint and capacity formula reflect the target class sizes as outlined in the settlement of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit.

Chancellor Selection

We urge you to engage the CECs and parents in your process to select a new Chancellor. We suggest that you identify the candidates for this critical position in an open fashion and enable communities of parents to engage with them. We also urge you to give parents a voice in this process by including several Citywide forums to provide information to NYC public school parents as well as an introduction of potential candidates.

We ask that you select a person with a background in education, who has had experience in leading a large school system, is open to innovation and is respectful of the input of families.

Charter Schools and Co-locations

Co-locations continue to be a source of contention in the districts. Many community members feel that any hearings are exercises in futility as there have been few denials of charter school plans to enter a school. We are often faced with outright land grabs when charter schools enter buildings and usurp specialized rooms such as labs, music rooms or therapy rooms. We have yet to see the promised sharing of resources and successful methods as described in the original plans for charter school as laboratories for the development of innovative teaching methodologies.

We strongly support the view that any co-locations must be done with the support of the communities that would be affected. We also believe that the state law on charters paying rent must be followed, and would like to address the issue of using such rent payments to benefit the communities affected by co-locations.

Common Core

The development and adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were implemented with very little input from parents in New York City. Now our entire education system in the city is driven by the CCSS, yet parents have not been given adequate

Nov. 21, 2013 mins.

information on what the CCSS is, let alone how to help our children. The City's implementation of the CCSS has also been chaotic, with schools lacking training and curriculum materials well into the school year, major communications breakdowns, and rushed roll-out of new, one-size-fits-all assessments which seem arbitrarily to categorize the vast majority of our children as failures. If there is any validity to the CCSS (which not all educators embrace) it will be overshadowed by the poor implementation.

We urge the City to take a leading role in reevaluating the implementation of the CCSS. The new standards are demanding and cumulative from grade to grade (meaning to achieve 6th grade standards requires mastery of 5th grade standards). It would make more educational sense to phase in the CCSS one grade at a time. The way the CCSS is currently implemented requires students to master skills at an accelerated pace, not allowing for the type of deep understanding promoted by the very standards. This sudden implementation is likely to increase the achievement gap, as students already lagging behind will have further ground to cover to get to grade level on the new standards. If we are to move forward with the CCSS, understanding how children learn and how teachers teach effectively should be the foundation of the implementation strategy.

We also urge that the new administration begin outreach and dialogue with parents and communities about the origins, objectives and value of the CCSS, including the role of testing and test preparation in the CCSS implementation. We would like the new administration to bring in the NYS Education Department into this conversation as well. Parents must have a chance to learn more about the CCSS, and have our legitimate concerns in this area listened to, understood and acted upon.

High Stakes Testing: Impact on Students, Schools and Teachers

Parents, teachers and administrators are all increasingly troubled by the growing emphasis on high-stakes testing and its impact on our schools' teaching environment. Under the rubric of "accountability," high-stakes tests have achieved a dominance that is dramatically changing classroom culture. Instead of a classroom environment which encourages curiosity and critical thinking – rooted in teachers' freedom to make professional, independent decisions about instruction and curriculum - we're seeing our schools pressured to "teach to the test" and supplant regular instruction with test prep, since school test performance reluctantly takes administrative priority. The number of classroom hours spent in test-taking (six days this past spring) and preparing for them takes away valuable and irreplaceable teaching time, and the quality of teaching in our children's classrooms is sadly compromised.

While we acknowledge that testing in and of itself has its uses for assessment or to periodically gauge aspects of student achievement, most educators and many education policy makers concur that the state tests do not fit the extremely high stakes purposes for which they are being used. Many of the test questions currently in use have been flagged as pedagogically unsound, and the tests overall produce overly narrow, inconsistent and unreliable measures of student progress and accomplishment. High-stakes tests are also completely developmentally inappropriate for K-2 students (the newest, youngest age group targeted for them) – as a whole chorus of child development specialists and educators can attest. Yet these tests are being used as both gatekeepers to determine students' qualifications to advance a grade and to judge the overall quality of schools.

We recommend that you place a moratorium on the use of these tests in these "high stakes" capacities, and take a firm stand against the use of tests in kindergarten through second grades, which seems a harmful trend.

Most recently, and perhaps most insidiously, the state test results are being used as a measure of teacher performance. The decision to link student performance on state tests to a value-added algorithm assessing teacher quality makes students and parents unwitting or unwilling collaborators in an evaluation system that lacks validity, contributes to lowered morale, and may result in wrongfully negative teacher assessments and their concomitant implications for job security. Studies show that, amidst our national worries about how U.S. students compare internationally, middle-class U.S. students perform on a par with the highest achieving nations. When the data is disaggregated, the differentiations we see are mostly related to SES. In short, poverty is the root problem in struggling schools, not bad teachers.

We recommend that you work to modify this aspect of the teacher evaluation, recognizing that this may involve re-negotiating Race to the Top monies.

Nov. 21, 2013 mins.

Special Education

Recent changes in the delivery system of special education for students with IEPs have been a cause for concern. Implementation of the changes has resulted in confusion at the school level. Principals have repeatedly raised issues regarding appropriate funding; staff have raised concerns about their own preparedness for the changes; and parents have been left with a sense of dread as they register their children in schools or watch their children progress through the system. While we appreciate the effort to roll out these changes gradually, it has been noted by parents that schools often do not understand the changes. Parents attest to the fact that IEP teams will often suggest changes in a child's IEP to meet service availability at the school not services mandated on an already approved IEP. Middle and high school application processes limit students with IEPs to fewer schools, especially those students who use wheelchairs or have ambulation problems or who desire access to CTE programs.

Beyond these recent changes, the assessment and delivery of special education services for students has long fallen short of the mark. Parents are also unable to monitor whether and how students are receiving IEP mandated services, in part because parents have no access to the SESIS system. In addition, IEPs and information concerning a child's receipt of services (including access to SESIS) is often not provided to parents in their home language.

We recommend an immediate review of the current system. NYC DOE should also invest in proven, successful, research-based programs for students with special needs, including the innovative use of assistive technology.

Student Information and Data

Recently a legal action by 12 parents, which we support, regarding student data and privacy, has been filed. Additionally, elected officials from New York State have proffered legislation to opt out of the NYSED program for student data sharing, InBloom. While this opt out runs the risk of losing Race to the Top money for schools, we strongly support efforts to limit access to our children's school records.

We agree with others parents that the use of these assessments to evaluate staff should be delayed

Other Important Issues

In the interest of brevity, we mention a few additional items which are of serious importance to our CECs which we would greatly appreciate the opportunity to address with the new administration, including: class sizes; the continually increasing achievement gaps between students on socio-economic and racial lines; changes to the admissions process for high school, middle school, and G&T programs; and immediate remediation for Sandy-affected schools.

The best students and schools are those in which parents are actively involved. "Schools would have to spend \$1,000.00 more per pupil to reap the same gains that an involved parent brings."

The same holds true for the school systems.

As you prepare to take the helm of our great school system, we urge you to support and to adopt these policy recommendations as the considered views of the public school parents and students we were elected to serve. We look forward to working closely with you for the betterment of all of our students and schools.

Yours sincerely,

Council voted unanimously to have Jeannette Segal, President sign off on this letter and send back to Mayor DeBlasio.

Q – Anastasio asked, will there be a resolution on the Quiet skies presentation. A study has been approved but needs to be signed by Cuomo.

A - Jeannette this will go to old business.

Jeannette stated at MS 67 there is a new Assistant Principal (Anthony Rizzo) for grade 7 ELA.

Alan stated that PS 173 is looking for 2nd Asst. Principal because of increase in student body. He asked if video cameras were part of what security the DOE was working on?

Nov. 21, 2013 mins.

Jeannette asked that she think it falls under a different pool of money and MS 67 just got their surveillance cameras.

3. Attended the NYSTESOL Conference where the NYS Commissioner for ELLs, Angelica Infante, shared the roadmap for ELLs. She was formerly in charge of ELLs for NYC and believes in involving parents. She also shared the upcoming initiatives for ELLs.

They include:

- * Current P12 curriculum will be scaffold and available in the next couple of months
- * Math will be translated into 5 different languages
- * A Native language arts curriculum is expected to be released
- * A blueprint with 8 principles will be developed
- * Building administrators need to capitalize on the expertise of the ESL teachers

Ms. Infante plans to raise the level of awareness expecting that all teachers are teachers of English not only the ESL teachers. She will be working with a leadership group consisting of the districts with the highest number of ELL populations and hopes to understand what the ESL delivery methods of instruction are. The audience members praised her consideration that an ESL curriculum and resources need to be made available and quickly.

Ms. Infante's office will be asking the Federal government for a closer look at:

- * allowing ELLs to take the native language exam instead of ELA starting with Spanish middle of Feb.

- * Requesting and extension to the 1 year cutoff of when ELLs must take the ELA with possible 2-3 year extension (will be a local option)

- * requesting that neither students nor schools be penalized if they do take state exams

- * The Seal of bi-literacy initiative is moving forward and they are asking school districts to volunteer to enact the Seal

In addition she discussed the Part 154 changes to occur by January with changes presented and possibly posted on the web.

She shared that research shows the former ELLs outperform everyone!

Alan made a motion to adjourn the Business meeting and Anastasio seconded. The council voted unanimously to adjourn.

Meeting ended 9:45 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Lucy Vieco