

**Contracts for Excellence**

**Queens Public Meeting, 9/22/2009**

**P.S. 49**

**Public Comment**

MS. TAUB CHAN:

We want to know what you want because your public feedback is wanted and needed. There's a website that you can go on to give your opinions regarding this PowerPoint and Eleanor is also giving out paper where you can do a written feedback and we will take that back to Central with us.

So basically, the Department of Education 2009/2010 plan is a maintenance of effort. Additional monies were not brought in. They were the same, so that any programs that were started in the school last year can continue this year.

This will show how the Sequel E Plan is divided by allocation type. And this is very specific throughout the city. We're going to get more specific within our district. This shows how this divided through all funds by the program area and these are the six criteria that I mentioned. And this is the discretionary spending by the program area. So, there were choices given, which is very nice for a school community. Hopefully, each principal went back to their solution team and spoke about this so that it is a very collaborative effort on where money should go.

I had mentioned that the funds were the same from year to year. However, the school could not maintain effort due to significant changes in its student population or its overall instructional strategy. They could choose to reallocate the funds to a different program area. So, they left some funds to go for this which is always nice when you're dealing with money.

And then this breaks down how the money was used based on the daily spending directly to the schools for specific uses. So it mentions collaborative teaching, (indiscernible) pre-K, autism, spectrum disorder classrooms, ELL of summer school.

There was further division of money for multiple pathways to graduation initiatives, principal training initiatives, school restructuring initiatives, year two of ELL success and middle school success grants and college and AP prep for high need 9-12 students.

I know this is difficult to see but basically this is how the monies were broken with regard to class size reduction, time to task, teacher-principal quality

## NYC Board of Education - Contracts for Excellence - District # 24

initiatives, etcetera.

Very important that there is a website at the bottom of this page and it can give you the comprehensive information about each post allocation for your individual school. At this time, I ask Sylvia Jamison to come up and she's going to talk about the allocations for our district specifically.

SYLVIA JAMISON:

The School District 24 and (indiscernible) 31percent were set aside for class size reduction. And of that 19.2% went to the creation of additional classrooms. 11.8percent went to reducing teacher and student ratio for team keeping strategies, in terms of time on task, 9.4% was set aside for before and after school programs, 12.5% was set aside for dedicated instructional time and, 5.9% were set aside for individualized tutoring. In terms of the teacher and principal quality initiatives, schools in District 24 set aside 1.7% of (indiscernible) programs to recruit and retain high quality teachers. 3.9% were set aside for professional measurement of new teachers. 7.4% were set for (tape ends).

TAPE B:

SYLVIA JAMISON (CONTINUED):

(indiscernible) teachers and 3.4 were set aside for (indiscernible) for principals. In terms of middle school and high school restructuring, 4.4% of schools initially four set aside funds for instructional changes and 1 of 4 set were aside for structural changes in the schools. (tape ends.)

TAPE C:

SYLVIA JAMISON (CONTINUED):

2.8% of the (tape ends).

TAPE D:

SYLVIA JAMISON (CONTINUED):

-- District 24 was set aside for full day pre-K programs. And last year in terms of model programs for English language learners 16percent were set aside for (indiscernible) programs of ELL students and 16.5% were set aside for parent involvement.

MS. TAUB CHAN:

So basically as teacher's salaries rise, more funds are required to maintain the same number of teachers as last year. And many schools chose class size reduction of pupils in (indiscernible) strategy to avoid increased class size. Now, I know some of you are wondering, well if they got money for smaller classes, how come so many classes have overcrowding and anticipating that question because being new to the district, I understand that overcrowding is one of your biggest concerns, and rightfully so. So, right now, the only way I can answer that question is by assuming that the projected registers were smaller in June than anticipated in September and there is a whole variable of reasons for that and we can talk about that after the PowerPoint.

As I said when I started, public comment is very important. There is a website that you can go on in addition to the public feedback. If you have concerns about the money, the way the money was divided, once you see the printout and look at your individual school, it is very important that your voice be heard because I am all for sharing information and I believe that if you would like something changed, you need to voice it and I'm very supportive of that. And thank you very much.

MS. TAUB CHAN:

Take some questions?

MR. SPEAKER 1:

We are going to take some of your questions. Please try to keep your comments and questions on the brief side so that everyone can get a chance to ask one. David, do you have one. We'll let Margie (ph.) go next after that.

MS. TAUB CHAN:

I just want to mention that as a new person, if I don't something, I'm not going to pretend that I do. I'm a straight shooter. And luckily I have technical support here. So, I might be referring to one of my colleagues.

DAVE QUINTANA (ph.):

As am I a straight shooter. My name is Dave Quintana. I probably don't need the mike. The DOE PowerPoint presentation, I feel, is an inadequate presentation of the real situation. What does it leave out? Any information on the targets of the city's five year class size reduction plan and

## NYC Board of Education - Contracts for Excellence - District # 24

the fact that for the first two years of the program, it's failed to meet any of its class size targets. And in fact, last year, class size increased city-wide, the most in ten years despite this. Smaller class sizes remain the top priority of parents according to the DOE's own surveys. The State's highest court said that New York City parents were deprived of a constitutional right to the inadequate education because of excessive class sizes. The city promised, as part of the Contract for Excellence, that they would reduce class sizes in every year until 2011/2012 school year. They failed to do that. The State has a State mandate. The city is violating the law. For the 2000/2008 school year, the state found that the city had made none of its targets, that the pupil to teacher ratio had increased in more than half of the schools and in seventy schools that received nearly 20 million in class size reduction funds both class sizes and student-teacher ratio increased.

The state also said that the city would be required to improve implementation of the second year of its class size plan, yet the following year, 2008/2009, which we're in now, class sizes increased once again rather than decreased in every grade but the fourth and sixth city-wide. In more than half the schools, they were reducing -- that said they were reducing class size, class sizes has actually increased. Earlier this month, city comptroller Thompson released an order showing that in 2007/2008, the city misused 47 million in early grade class size reduction program meant to reduce sizes in K through 3. As part of the Contract for Excellence that the City signed with the State, the City promised to the State to continue the program, "the department continues to be committed to reducing class sizes in early grades via the early grade class size reduction program." The administration's response: DOE's response to last week's audit is that this program has ceased to exist. The comments period on this Contract for Excellence closes on October 8th. I am urging CECs to pass resolutions which I gave Nick a sample of the resolution asking the city to follow through on its legal and moral commitments to our students and reduce class sizes and ask the State to withhold any more C4E funds, until the City does so. We have a sam -- I have a sample resolution and a fact sheet, if anybody wants any further information, please see me at the end of the meeting. I'd be happy to email any of this information to people. Thank you, Nick. Thank you, Ma'am.

MS. TAUB CHAN:

I have a question about the full day pre-K. But first, I want to say that, I mean, this has nothing to do you Madeleine, but these hearing were supposed to be held last spring and the city is in violation of State law by not holding them and parents pointed out to Tweed (ph.) that these meetings were supposed to be held and that's why they are being held now, but we've already started the school year. And the principals have already budgeted to spend this money and, you know, I had a school leadership team meeting today. We didn't get a full budget of what -- including what the C3 money was gonna to

NYC Board of Education - Contracts for Excellence - District # 24

be spent on. All she did was give us a list of all the teachers and what their salaries were. You know, she gave us staff salaries. She didn't give us anything about individualized tutoring or afterschool programs or any of those other issues.

But anyway, my question on full day pre-K is, if every principal is getting C4E money, then why is it that the City is deciding where and whether to place full day pre-K programs? Principals don't seem to have the option to have a full day pre-K in their school. The City is deciding which schools get full day pre-K. In fact, 113 got a full day pre-K. And -- right Nick, didn't 113 get full day pre-K this year?

NICK:

One class.

MS. SPEAKER 1:

Yeah. And some parents were saying, well, we'd rather have two half day classes to accommodate more children. But the City, and I went through this with Sandy Brower (ph.), and he said the City was deciding where to put the full day pre-K. And then people come to us and say, oh you got more full day pre-K than any other district. Yeah, because we never had it before. District 30 has always had 8 or 10 full day pre-K classes and we never had any until, I think, last year, they might have put some at 307. But my question is if the principals are getting the C4E money, why can't they decide whether to have full day pre-K? Why is the City telling the schools where the full day pre-K is going to be?

MS. TAUB CHAN:

It's a very valid question. I'm glad that we have it recorded on feedback and we will take that back to - -

MS. SPEAKER 1:

Well Sandy thinks he can answer it.

MR. SPEAKER 1:

Sandy knows everything, so remember if you have a question --

MS. SPEAKER 1:

I know he knows everything but --

MR. SPEAKER 2:

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. I guess I remember (indiscernible) conversation, but I don't remember that one where as the City places, pre-K. There is a process for placing pre-K in schools and it's a process that looks at space, it looks at numbers of children on wait lists, it looks at where the accommodations are and it also deals with money. Let's all remember that most of the pre-K money that comes down, it comes down from universal pre-K which only allows for half-day pre-K in our schools and there's a certain dollar value that we have to do that so there's only a certain amount of growth that can be done each year. The amount that gets used for C4E pre-K is only that that can be expended to expand to full day pre-K. So when you're looking at which buildings to take pre-K, you have to look at what the population is, you have to look at the overcrowding where the spaces and you also have to look where the waiting lists are. Now, we know that this district doesn't have nearly the number of pre-K seats that it would like to have, so when you look at the district and you look at the space that's available, there aren't tremendous amounts of places that you can open pre-K classes in schools and then we look to CDOs, to open some CDOs. So there is a process, if you would like, there is a pre-K office that's borough based in every borough and we can have them come down here and have a discussion on pre-K, if the CUC would like that to have happen, we can make contact and have a discussion on pre-K.

MR. SPEAKER 2:

As long as it's a person who can actually answer the questions and not someone who's going to say I've got to take it back. As long as that's the case, then it won't waste our time.

MR. SPEAKER 2:

Understood.

MR. SPEAKER 1:

Joanne. And then Robert.

JOANNE:

I have a question for --

MR. SPEAKER 1:

Let's speak up because it is hard to hear.

JOANNE:

## NYC Board of Education - Contracts for Excellence - District # 24

I have a question for Miss Chan. I'm a parent of three children at P.S. 153. We have a huge, huge problem in overcrowding at our school. Two of my children are in the gifted program there and I'd like to know if there's anything you can do to restore somebody in this district that parents can go to for answers. Since we went regions, we lost everybody. We had, I believe, Cheryl Potrano (ph.), when we were regions then we just panted from regions and went back to districts and we've had nobody whatsoever to go to at the district level. We were sent to Ana Coma Tonti (ph.) at Central and we don't get responses back from her. We send emails. We don't get responses. It's really a shame because this was a program that's been in this district for over twenty five years and a good solid program. And the numbers are going down because we can't fit the children in our schools -- the enrollment's going down and I'm really scared as to what's gonna to happen. So, I'd like somebody in this district to be able -- that we can go to who knows what we want and not somebody sitting in Manhattan that doesn't know the needs of this district, as regards to the GNT program.

MS. TAUB CHAN:

So, I am hearing that you want to restore the GNT?

JOANNE:

We have the GNT program. What I'd like is somebody in this district that we can go and talk to, like we used to have Dr. Pero (ph.) or we used to have Cheryl Potrano at least somebody, even though she had to go to Ana Coma Tonti for answers, but we had somebody that we could speak to. Now we have no one and haven't since they disbanded the regions.

MS. TAUB CHAN:

Okay. I'm going to ask that you come to me because I'm available and I really want to help and then I will take that a little further and investigate a bit. Okay, but I'm asking you to send an email to me. Eleanor --

JOANNE:

Okay. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER 2:

Also, just to add to that, we will -- our committees that we will form (indiscernible) announce today. I'd like anyone in the audience who wants to be part of a committee within the CUC, they won't have the overpowers on here but you could definitely, if you wanted to be part of the committees,

## NYC Board of Education - Contracts for Excellence - District # 24

please do so, so you could attend those meetings and that's something the superintendent and I will talk about is that if you want to have these committee meetings, you want to get the parents more involved, come to these committees and try to get those people like Ana Coma Tonti, to come to that committee meeting which hopefully we can come up with once a month and some of you leaders we can get to the talent and curriculum can come there as well and speak.

MS. TAUB CHAN:

If I could just say, I don't want to be presumptuous, but I'm a parent also and if someone kept saying to me, I'll let you know, I'll let you know, I'll let you know, I would get very frustrated. So, I don't want to be the superintendent who's constantly going to let you know. I really would like to see a change. I'd like to work with you to make a change. And I imagine that some of you are skeptical because I know that change is very hard to get. But, I'm telling you I'm very dedicated in doing that and I will do whatever I have to do. I will listen to you. I wear my parent hat more so than anything else, so I hear what you are saying.

MR. SPEAKER 3:

I want to welcome you to school block 24. Mark Chinally (ph.). I've been away for a little while, but I want to ask a basic question. You want to reduce class size, so we're going to have more money to reduce class size. I would presume you're going to do that by getting more teachers and getting -- increasing the ratio of teachers and students. But if you don't have the classrooms to put the teachers in, how do you reduce the class size? Now you have - say you have sufficient teachers to reduce the ratio, but you don't have the classes. Are you going to have two teachers in one class? Or how are you going to do that? What's the plan?

MS TAUB CHAN:

Right. So since I came into this district, I have wanted a magic wand to just be able to build school because that's what I think you really need. You need more space. Space is of the essence here. So, Mr. Komiani (ph.) was talking to me about re-zoning issues. And right now, that's all I see on the agenda as a solution. I don't have another solution. But your point is well taken. We can put the money there. We can get more teachers. But, where are we going to put them? There's no space.

MR. SPEAKER 4:

Where you put those new teacher? Where you put those reduced class size classes ties right back to this question. You get rid of the pre-K. And

## NYC Board of Education - Contracts for Excellence - District # 24

that's -- the principals and the SLTs have the option of determining their use of the facilities and the size of the classroom and what they choose to do. I know, particularly, at 58 and I know it happens at other schools where they reduce the number of pre-K classes so that they can have additional classrooms so that they can reduce size so that they can hire more teachers. It seems as though, and you hit the nail on the head. It's the space issue. There's a finite amount of space that we're dealing with and what's happening is your robbing from one need to try to solve another.

MS. TAUB CHAN:

Pre-K should not be the sacrifice, that's not right.

MR. SPEAKER 4:

But it's happening across the board. I just wanted to interject that. Sorry.

MR. SPEAKER 5:

Right as he was saying, it's more likely that you could find a smaller commercial space that the city could lease in the neighborhood. There's plenty of commercial space open for pre-K that could set up expedited CVOs within walking distances of the schools. I really think that that would be a great alternative, you know, for the pre-K. And commercial space is cheap.

MR. SPEAKER 2:

That's certainly something we could look at. The question would be who would be running that. You're going to have just a school of pre-K? I don't know if that would fly in terms of getting a principal and a staff, but it's something that we could propose, unless we make it part of an annex of another building. Right but that would be a CVO that would have to come into that building, lease that building and run that program. There are things that we can all look at. Let's just understand, I'm listening to this space thing and I'm listening to the money and they all are very connected together. Alright, let's face it. We have a problem with space here. We are again, I'll say it many times you've heard it, you know it, we've gotten the most seats over the last few years than any district in this city. A new capital plan is coming up, a new five day capital plan and we have to again be out there and to try to get more seats as we continue to grow and grow and grow. There is no stopping to this growth, unbelievably.

So, and there are also conflicting needs for that space. There's special-needs students, there's pre-K, there's reduced class size, there's gifted and talented. The list goes on and on. Every group has a need for that space and every

## NYC Board of Education - Contracts for Excellence - District # 24

group is a great advocate for that space. We have to make it all work. And then there's the dollar issue and we're looking at reduced class size and I heard your statement. And so, two things -- several things that happen. Let's just talk frank, when the State was allocating money for class size reduction, as they were saying they're giving us targets, the dollar stayed flat year after year after year. However, contracts go up. Teacher's salaries go up. So when the dollar stays flat, you can buy less teachers. And so there's not the same amount of money to pay for the same amount of teachers. Also, we face major cuts this year and last year. This year was 4.9% average for all schools. In reality, you're going to wind up seeing, and we do see less teachers, so there's higher class sizes throughout. While we still have this money called C4E, and some of its going for class size reduction, we still have a huge amount of money out of our budget and therefore it will have less teachers and higher class sizes, amongst other things. So, there's a lot of things going on and the economy is trying to fix itself and so as far -- until that gets fixed and more money comes back in, we're going to see a little bit higher class sizes. As soon as we get more seats and space, then we'll try to reduce as much as we can. So, there's a lot of things that we need to try to work together to try to make that happen.

CHARLIE BERESCA:

Hi. I'm Charlie Beresca (ph.), president of the (indiscernible) fund. I would like to welcome you to District 24. A moment ago to answer a question that try to restore a gifted program. Well, the Beacon Program has been a gifted program at P.S. 153 for over twenty-five years. We're a K-6 program and 3 years ago, the deal we took away our kindergarten, and we lost that. And this year even though city-wide, the deal we came out with a standard that all gifted programs would start at kindergarten, we not only didn't get our kindergarten back, our first grade class was put in a shared classroom together with another first grade class. And this is a self-contained gifted program, yet the first grade is in a shared classroom which is a contradiction in itself. And I'd like to know how you can help us to make sure that we can keep our program vigorous at P.S. 153 and I want to know, do you support gifted programs as a superintendent?

MS. TAUB CHAN:

I certainly feel that there is an important place for gifted programs. I am going to meet with the principal. I'm going to work with the school leadership team and I will investigate exactly what you're telling me and I will do my best to support what your goal is and that is to keep the gifted and talented thriving.

MR. SPEAKER:

Will you work with the Beacon parents (indiscernible)?

MS. TAUB CHAN:

Absolutely.

MS. SPEAKER 3:

Yes. Hi. I'm speaking as a parent. I am talking about space. Since P.S.7 was built, I walked into that building and realized that there was so much space wasted just in the entryway of P.S.7. I feel the same -- it is a gorgeous building, but I feel exact -- who is designing these buildings? Now, we could probably, in P.S.7, after five years P.S.7 is a K-3. There's no pre-K in the school, there's no pre-K in 128. Two new schools built, I don't know what 153 is like but we won't say anything about it, but I just don't understand why the Board of Education is building buildings like that waste out there. Now, it is gorgeous, but the size of the hallways in P.S.7, the size of the staircases, do we need that type of building? There could be so many more classrooms in those buildings. I just don't understand it. And then you turn around and say we don't have room for two little pre-K classes? Who's doing this? SCA - are they here? Some architect -- but we should-- we should change our architect, change the architect, that's all I have to say. And I have been wanting to say that.

MR. SPEAKER 6:

We don't have -- we have space when you come to that November meeting and that's a great question to put to them. I like that.

MS. SPEAKER 3:

I've been saying it for as long as P.S.7 was built, and they didn't listen to me then and I was a parent.

MR. SPEAKER 1:

We're going to take one more question and then we're going to move on to the super being questioned that are going to be answered. But we'll wait that at the proper form, so is there anybody have a question. I'm sorry, so we'll take you, one, two and that's it. Last question and then we're going to move on to answer questions later on.

MS. SPEAKER 4:

I'm just here because I received something in regards to the rezoning.

NYC Board of Education - Contracts for Excellence - District # 24

And because I live in an area of Middle Village that could be questionable, I'm concerned about where my daughter's going to wind up. And when, how far in advance are we going to get notices when the children get rezoned?

MR. SPEAKER 2:

There's hearings that we hold when there's rezoning, but I could tell you, I don't know about any rezoning in Middle Village, so that you know. I mean --

MS. SPEAKER 4:

Because our children are zoned to --

MR. SPEAKER 2:

Her question was, she lives in Middle Village and there was talk of rezoning and she wants to know when the rezoning will happen, how much notice would you have and so forth. Well, usually what happens before we rezone, we hold hearings, public hearings and we get public input. Everybody gets to say, you know, how they feel about the current proposed rezoning and then we take it from there. Then, we take a vote on it basically. So, that's the way it works. We're just going to move on, go ahead last question. That's it. Then we're going to move on -- but we'll have more questions

MS. SPEAKER 5:

I just want to know. Is the city aware of the fact that we are asking for rezoning? Is that anywhere in their realm? Do they know that --

MR. SPEAKER 2:

Oh, yeah, yeah. We were going to rezone last year, then they told us this year to wait and see how everything goes and where the sand settles.

MS. SPEAKER 5:

And then will there be a meeting about that?

MR. SPEAKER 2:

Oh, absolutely. Many meetings, not one.

MS. SPEAKER 5:

That we can come to?

NYC Board of Education - Contracts for Excellence - District # 24

MR. SPEAKER 2:

Absolutely. They're public meetings. Okay, so we're going to move on with our agenda. I'll ask the council to come and sit down please.