



Citywide Council on Special Education

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05/20/2009 CALENDAR MEETING MINUTES

The Calendar Meeting of the Citywide Council on Special Education was held on Wednesday, May 20, 2009 at 6:30 p.m at Tweed Courthouse, 52 Chambers Street, Manhattan, NY.

1. Roll Call

Charlene Carroll-Hall	Present
John Englert	Present
Charles Henderson	Excused
Diana Marenfeld	Excused
Ellen McHugh	Present
Tom Ryan, Jr.	Present
Patricia Connelly	Present
Gloria Gonslves	Present

2. Secretary's Report – Charles Henderson

The Meeting Minutes dated 2/11/09 & 4/22/09 were approved.

3. Special Education in NYC: Public Advocate-Honorable Betsy Gotbaum

Tom Ryan, Salutations for the Public Advocate, Betsy Goutbaum mentioned her commitment and support:

- Appointing two members to sit on the CCSE.
- CCSE produced the first D75 Parent Survey and Betsy arranged a press conference to release the council's findings.
- CEC President's unable to facilitate space for monthly sessions/ meetings; Betsy graciously provided space within her office.
- The Public Advocate has produced reports: April 2009, "Is Anybody Listening?" a follow up survey of NYC DOE Parent Coordinators. The November 2008, "Overworked, Underutilized" how the DOE Reorganizations of Special Education turned School Psychologist from Mental Health Profession into Paper pushers and "Mixed Signals: 311 Fails to Provided Information".
- The Public Advocate produced weekly newsletters, "Improving Access This Week:

The Awards Reads: Special Education Advocate Award, Presented to Betsy

Gotbaum in Grateful Appreciation for her Outstanding Dedication to Special Education, the Citywide Council on Special Education May 20th 2009.

Public Advocate, Betsy Gotbaum, has adopted the whole issue of Special Education within NYC, because it was important of parents with children with special needs to receive extra help as well as help those parents of general educations students. She also mentioned John Englert has been a wonderful leader and they share a good relationship, she will never forget her work with special education and appreciate the parents and what they do. Ms. Gotbaum was glad that Superintendent Bonnie Brown was in attendance and acknowledged that she is a consistent fighter for D75. Betsy went on to inform the parents that she appointed Ellen McHugh (as well as Maria Garcia) to the council and Ellen has been a tremendous resource to the council as well as to the Public Advocates Office. Betsy mentioned her first experience in 2004 while attending a social function School Psychologists informed her that they were becoming clerks, her office found that 20 thousand kids were not being tested and receiving service that they are entitled to by law. Her office and CCSE brought attention to what was happening with the IEP's and during the summer session students with IEP's were finally tested and receive services.

Ms. Gotbaum mentioned Kathy Nolan, Chair of the State Committee on Education asked for her office to format a commission (10 parents and Kim Sweet) regarding School Governance/Mayoral Control. After a year of listening to various points of view the commission presented their recommendations:

1. Keeping Mayoral Control
2. PEP Appointees; Mayor have the majority of appointees with fixed terms and will only be fired due to "Just Cause"
3. District Superintendents head of Geographical District will allow easy parent access and accountability.
4. An Independent Office for the Analyst of Data within the IBL: Independent Budget Office.
5. The Importance of the CEC's: People who have a stake in education.

4. President's Report: John Englert

John thanked the audience and guest for attending the meeting at Tweed and informed the parents at the end of June 2009 (School Governance) the law granting Mayoral Control will sunset. If the law is not renewed or an alternative plan is not in place the law will revert back to the School Boards. CCSE, CCHS and CEC's will cease to exist. When we put our agenda together in September 2008 we wanted to talk about School Governance this month and a few of the council members have been on this council since it's inception 2004-2005 and I have had the honor and privilege of chairing this council for the last few terms. My colleagues are the most knowledgeable, smart, caring, astute individual's that you will see when it comes to special education in NYC. We are only successful as you make us successful and that goes from the Superintendent Bonnie Brown, Deputy Superintendent Gary Hetch, District Family Advocate Ray Velez, Sacha Ingles, to the Principals, Parent Coordinators, and teachers; most importantly of all the parents. On behalf of the CCSE I would like to thank everyone for their support during our term on the CCSE.

The next item on the agenda Betsy Gotbaum, Public Advocate; it's no secret that Betsy is a very good friend to CCSE tonight we salute Betsy and Tom Ryan 1st VP will provide the salutations.

5. District 75 Superintendent's Report: Bonnie Brown

Budget Cuts: Principals received their allocations; there will be reductions within the schools. We are looking at the day to day operations that will hopefully not impact the students such as: Teachers/Para-Professionals per-diem and per session that schools had surplus money to utilize. A large portion of our schools had a surplus roll over for this year and will be able to use the roll over surplus to off-set the budget cuts. Hopefully the District Office will continue support the schools in professional development initiatives.

ELA: The Students did well regarding the ELA Scores decrease on level 1 and in a larger increase on level 2 and increase on level 3 and 4.

Special Events: A the school year come to a close we have many special events such as proms, graduations, health fairs and our work with Yale University on emotional literacy in five more schools on June 4th and we will be working with Dr. Robin Stern of Columbia University who will be working with our parents to help them develop a toll-kit for dealing with their children's excessive behavior and stress.

Next Year: Next year we will hire two/three net-work leaders to replace the ones who retired, expand our office of transition by hiring a new director and more transition coaches as well as formed a partnership with FED CAP who will be working with 751M; Manhattan School for Career Development.

6. Recommendations of the Parent Commission on School Governance & Mayoral Control

Lisa Donlan, President, CDEC Dist 1 presented Recommendations of the Parent Commission on School Governance & Mayoral Control. Please see the attached Recommendations.

Meeting adjourned at 9pm