

Citywide Council on Special Education

45-18 Court Square - 2nd Floor-Room 260, Long Island City, New York 11101

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02/04/09 WORKING MEETING MINUTES

The Working Calendar Meeting of the Citywide Council on Special Education was held on Wednesday, February 4, 2009 at 6:00pm at 45-18 Court Square, Long Island City, NY 11101. The following people were in attendance.

1. Roll Call

1. Charlene Carroll-Hall	Present
2. John Englert	Present
3. Charles Henderson	Present
4. Diana Marenfeld	Excused
5. Ellen McHugh	Present
6. Tom Ryan, Jr.	Present
7. Patricia Connelly	Present
8. Gloria Gonsalves	Present

2. Consideration of Agenda and Time Allocations

The time allocations as noted on the Agenda were found to be acceptable.

3. Appointed Timekeeper

Ramona Garcia

3A. Revision to the Agenda: Garth Harries: Former Chief Executive for Portfolio and Development

John introduced Garth Harries the new Senior Coordinator for Special Education. Garth asked to be invited to the working meeting to meet with the Council before the February 11th Calendar Meeting (invited guest speaker along with Dr. Marcia Lyles, Deputy Chancellor of Teaching and Learning. Garth informed the council that the Chancellor and Dr. Lyles asked for him to except the position as the Senior Coordinator for Special Education in which he will be under Teaching and Learning (reporting to Dr. Lyles); part of the Leadership team working with Linda Warnokoff and Bonnie Brown to improve the quality of educational and other services within special education (this will include the community and district 75 schools). The hope and motivation from Dr. Lyles and the Chancellor in asking Garth to join the team is to combine educational expertise that Linda and Bonnie brings and the rest of the leaders in existing special education brings to bear with Garth's experience in cross system work in the DOE. What he has done in the past is has lead cross functional exercises of different kinds. Garth's back ground is not in

education/educator, has legal training and worked as a manager at a consulting firm. Garth has mentioned that he has a lot to learn and has a lot to offer. In his conversations with Linda and Bonnie he understands that there are many different issues and improvements in recent years and more work to do for the improvement for special education. Garth informed the council that there have been rumors of this initiative being a cost cutting and reorganization exercise on special education and he insured the council that it wasn't. It's to improve service levels of all different kinds and ultimately try to improve the quality of educational and other achievements of special education students.

John asked each council member to introduce themselves, what school their child attends along with their questions and issues they have for Garth.

Council Members Comments and Recommendations:

John Englert

Stated that his son of 10 years is transitioning to middle school and he doesn't know what school he will be attending. He is concerned given the environment there will not be a place for his son come September 2009. Stated community schools are refusing to seat special needs children in their schools.

He asked Mr. Harries to read and review the many reports that have been produced during the last 5 years naming: The Heir Report, The CCSE Survey, and The Council on Great City Schools Report and Public Advocates Report on Special Education.

Stated that the 55 million dollar management system the DOE is spending to develop a tracking and documentation system for special needs children points directly to the lack of documentation and accountability regarding the progress of special needs children parents have been asking for since the beginning.

He stated that each students IEP is unique and that any management system that is developed should reflect that uniqueness as well as be able to incorporate and inform parents.

Patricia Connelly

Regarding student seats: Wants to know why DOE and all other Advocates for Children organizations numbers differ widely?

Why are CTT and Inclusion so different according to the DOE and why will the DOE create another name for inclusion?

She expressed concern about over crowded classrooms destroying the learning environment of inclusion classrooms.

She stated: Her child attends the Children School. The School has a true inclusion program and its educational model is being studied by schools across the country and overseas. She wants the DOE to create a Middle School and High School with the same Children School inclusion model. She stated, there is no school her child can attend to continue the Children School

program. She strongly advised that the administration go the school and visit a successful CTT inclusion program.

Ellen McHugh

She pointed out the lack of ED student graduates who are in standardized education programs. She is concerned that academic programs for ED students were not being supported.

Tom Ryan

Explained that IEP's for children in Special Education programs are unique and diverse and wants the DOE to realize that programs need to be very flexible.

Charles Henderson

States: D75 does not have any academic programs for any students accept for whom are diagnosed as ED or can get into a CTT program. His child was in an MIS program in a community school and by the time he finished middle school he needed more attention in keeping up with studies. He thought that since D75 programs allow students to attend until age 21 his child would receive the extra help he needed. He was not told his son would be placed into an alternate assessment program where the standard for learning is lower than that of second grader. It seems everyone involved avoided telling him of this and he had to find out on his own that this was the program his child was in. During argument after argument with teachers and administrators about the higher standards he wanted for his son, it seemed they would not mentioned the fact that the program his son was in did not allow for a higher learning standards. Only after joining the CCSE did he learn of the educational dilemma and conspiracy he faced.

He recommends for community based Special Education programs:
All year round school for all Special Education programs.
All Special Education students are allowed to attend school until the age 21.
Create vocational programs in community schools.

Charlene Carol-Hall

Expressed she wants her child who is in an ED program to graduate with an academic diploma.

4. Approval of Meeting Minutes dated 01/07/09

The meeting minutes dated 01/07/09 was approved.

5. Review of Item for 2/11/09 Public Meeting

i. Discussion on Recent Events

John informed the council; The Calendar Meeting will be held at 177Q; Deputy Chancellor Lyles and Garth Harries confirmed their attendance via the email. John mentioned the reason Garth was invited to the working meeting was to give the council time to speak to him and not to manipulate the time

with question during the calendar meeting that should be set aside for the parents of D75 students. The council agreed during the meeting there will be two different sign-in-sheets to speak and registration sheets (one for parents and one for DOE/Advocates). The set up will be as follow: the dais will be not be on the stage, the microphones will be on both sides of the room, there will be minute cards made up to allow parents know how much time they have at the microphone.

6. Assignment of 03/18/09 Public Meeting

The Calendar Meeting for 3/18/09 will be held at PSM721, the topic; Summer Planning: Camps and Job Training. Charlene, organizer of the upcoming calendar meeting informed the council she has a guest speaker in place and Ramona will reach out to the camps for another speaker to attend the meeting.

7. Old Business

i. Review/Discussion on Annual Report

Table for next Working Meeting on March 4th

ii. PEP Update

Panel for Educational Update: Linda Warnokoff gave a presentation on Special Education Management. A computerized system (data management) for IEP's on line. A firm was hired from VA the cost of 55 million (software) and an additional 27 million for DOE consultants. The Chancellor introduced Garth Harries at the meeting and Garth provided information regarding his new title.

iii. President's Council Meeting

John asked which council member will be in attendance for the next President's Meeting and that the meeting is held every second Tuesday. Due to the break in the School Schedule the council asked for Ramona to ask Carol Breuers, President of President's Council

8. New Business:

i. 3R's Pledge

John sent out the Pledge to the council for them to review. Patrica provided information to the council regarding how the Pledge was formulated, the mission/goals and the parents groups that are involved with the 3R's Pledge. Ellen Raider asked John will the council agree to be a part of the 3R's and John informed her that he has to meet, discuss and vote on participate/support the coalition. The council will look into the 3R's coalition and will make a decision at a later date.

i. Other Business:

No other items.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:00 pm