



Citywide Council on Special Education

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2/11/2009 CALENDAR MEETING MINUTES

The Calendar Meeting of the Citywide Council on Special Education was held on Wednesday, February 11, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. at P177Q, 56-37 188th Street, Fresh Meadows (Queens), New York 11365

1. Roll Call

Charlene Carroll-Hall	Present
John Englert	Present
Charles Henderson	Present
Diana Marenfeld	Present
Ellen McHugh	Present
Tom Ryan	Present
Patricia Connelly	Present
Gloria Gonsolves	Present

2. Secretary's Report – Charles Henderson

Approval for meeting minutes 1/21/09.

No quorum – No official minutes to approve.

3. Report of the President – John Englert

- John started his report saying: "Tonight's President's Report will be very short and will be different from his typical report. He stated, My focus will be on the Flyer that was given to you for tonight's meeting. The Flyer says, "What's Happening in Special Education with a big question mark?"
- The major stakeholders of Special Education, the parents, do not know what changes are being considered. I am the Chair of this Council and I am a parent and this is very disturbing and a scary situation!
- He stated his son who is in a 12:1:4 class, multi-handicapped and touches just about every base of special needs. He says, "We need to change the way the information is communicated, Tonight's meeting is the first step in doing that."
- John then greeted everyone giving thanks and his wishes for what should happen during and after the session: "I am very gratified to see this auditorium packed with parents and teachers. This tells me that we were able to get the word out. I ask that parents share the information that they hear tonight with other parents. Go to your PTA Meetings and tell them that you were at the CCSE Meeting. Tell them that the members are parents just like you and I. Maybe select a designee who will attend our meeting every month? Get the parents in your school involved. Before I go any further, I just want to say one thing. I've been talking a lot about the parents. Please note that this in no way discounts the tremendous effort of our teachers. As a parent who has developed and read the comments of parents on our CCSE Parent Survey, there is no other person a parent would trust with their child than their teacher. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to provide feedback to Mr. Garth Harries and Deputy Chancellor Dr. Lyles about special education. This is not to be confrontational; this is to be an informative meeting. I ask that everyone be respectful of one another's time and keep your comments to 4 minutes. Please be reminded that I am the Chair and will not hesitate to act if necessary should the meeting rules not be complied with.

4. Report of the Superintendent – Bonnie Brown

- Bonnie Brown, Superintendent of District 75 welcomed Dr. Lyles, Garth Harries, the parents and school staff and stated that she was glad to see the large turn out as well as support for District 75.
- Dr. Brown then informed the audience on the following:
- ELA Testing season has started.
- NICA folio's are in process.
- Working with Folio dept, they have identified additional space for middle schools.
- Working with Dept of Facilities successfully consolidated classes that were scattered in different sites to one site.
- In talks with SED to refine rules to identify dangerous behaviors in schools identified as dangerous.
- Informed parents of upcoming events: EPIC, Stern Awards, Literacy project, Channel 13 program.
- Talked about PBIS Grant and talks with Hunter College to create a program.
- Discussed talks taking place to address tracking alternate assessment progress.
- Talked about AVITAR computer program to improve student achievement and strengthen social skills.

5. Special Education Effectiveness and Efficiency Initiative: Dr. Marcia Lyles, Deputy Chancellor of Teaching and Learning and Garth Harries, Former Chief Executive of the DOE's Portfolio Department

John Englert, President of CCSE Welcomed and introduce the guest panel on the stage, informed the parents and DOE Staff the requirements of the night.

Dr. Marcia Lyles, Deputy Chancellor of Teaching and Learning welcomed everyone and mentioned Mr. Harries role, she stated they were at the meeting to listen. Dr. Lyles stated that Ms. Brown will be working with Mr. Harries who will be reviewing special education not only within District 75, also in general education community schools.

Garth Harries, Senior Coordinator for Special Education, formally the Chief Executive for Portfolio and Development introduced himself, welcomed the parents and provided his credentials (A lawyer, MBA, NYC DOE Former Portfolio Chief Director), Mr. Harries also mentioned that he has no special education expertise and that he had visited 2 schools within District 75 prior to the calendar meeting. Mr. Harries stated that he was at the meeting to listen and learn from the parents and DOE Staff. Mr. Harries said, "That there are and have been rumors about his purpose that he wanted to be really clear that know one has asked him to cut cost and that is important for all of the parents to understand. The lens for this work is to improve service for students so that our kids can do better".

6. Public Forum

The Calendar Meeting at P177Q invited parents from the five boroughs whose children are in attendance at district 75 schools; they came to address the panel: Dr. Lyles, Mr. Harries and Bonnie Brown, Superintendent of District 75 regarding the suggestions and changes that will take place with Special Education. As well as to meet newly hired Senior Coordinator for Special Education, Garth Harries, formally the Chief Executive for Portfolio and Development.

Parents and DOE School Leaders stated their concerns about Mr. Harries reviewing and future recommendations for special education programs. Parents expressed satisfaction with the services their children receive with District 75. One parent pleaded with the panel, "Please don't take this away from us". Another parent pointed out that her two sons are special education students one child attends D75 the other is attending a general special education high school. "District 75 teachers have a real passion for what their doing and there is acceptance for my child who is thriving. My other son in high school will be one of your drop-out statistics, the school he is attending 4 teachers out of 7 he see daily did not know he had an IEP". One parent presented a picture of her child to Mr. Harries passionately advising him, "to step out side of his

office and visit the schools, get to know the children, staff and teachers who work hard to serve them". She asked him "to keep this photo of my child on your desk and when making decisions do it with your heart not your pocketbook".

Many parents questioned Mr. Harries lack of experience and qualifications in regards to special education. Along with their frustration with Mr. Harries learning on the job, parents feel he needs real knowledge of IEP's, District 75 and Special Education Programs and Services offered and its processes. Carol Beaus, PTA President of P177Q and President of President's Council stated, pointed to his lack of special education experience, "you don't have any so with that the respectability will be hard for you to earn". A principal expressed her support for programs; teachers and the hard work and input provided for the students within D75 and questioned Mr. Harries qualifications by adding "Would you go to a general practitioner to perform open-heart surgery?" Parents continued to express their concern that services their child receives will be cut. Mr. Harries stated that he did not attend to remove programs. A parent asked Mr. Harries, "Will you assure us that the services in place won't be removed?"

Ms. Brown, D75 Superintendent interjected by informing the parents and D75 Staff that, "I see Garth working on a macro level doing systems changes. I see myself continuing what I've done for 30 years working on a micro level in schools, with teachers and kids. If Garth comes to me and tries to change a piece of specialized equipment or a reading program I may be small but I take a big bite and Garth is not going to do that nor does he feel comfortable to do that. Ms. Brown added," I think part of your fears of him making decisions that are going to affect the instructional programs, quality of education, specialized equipment and the services. I don't believe that Garth is here to do that. These people are looking at parts of the system like referral process, the placement process, how long it takes us when a child is decertified and how long it takes us to get them back into regular education". Ms. Brown closed with, "If you don't trust him, at least most of you have some level of trust in me," she said. "I'm not going to let him screw around with us."

Meeting adjourned at 9pm

1. ~~Spokes~~ PTA - Presidents Councils, express not happy with appointment., No experience - (4)

2. Concern ^{take} Bisected system and ~~unify~~ ^{unify} it -

3. Concerned about ReOrg, D75 dismantling. Inclusion continuation - Non speaking to College.

4. Concerned Great programs will be taken away.

5. PTA-Pres, 138 - Concerned about Inclusion Class Sizes. DOE doesn't ~~not~~ respond to mandates

6. Principal 138 - Concerned about Re-Org - ~~the~~ Re-Org will interfere with current progress and disrupt students and teachers -

7. Parent Co - Dismantling of EVS - P.S. 99 closed. Classes for EVS Bonnie fewer referrals - we have expertise -

8. Multiple handicapped Student - concerned about DOT. Wants OMRDP ~~wants~~ to cooperate with DOE

9. Expressed need to keep D75 going and progress going - children not a # but a person -

10. Wants Admin to come to classes and meet students.

11. DEC D37 President - D75 can teach everyone else. Expand D75 to train GenEd Teachers - GenEd Teachers should have more D75 training -

12. P10X - SSHA? Expressed Great programs in her District.

13. Parent - Expressed D75 success w/ her child -

- 14 - Wants M Lyles Office to directly go to a school and examine Educational system (5)
in place and make changes -
- No Collaboration betw GenEd & SpEd -
 - Review testing and time allotted because of time exceptions
 - IS more tests on 1 day a better system is needed for planning tests -
- 15 - RSA stipulations -
- 16 - Concerned ~~about~~ what's ~~studied~~ Garth to investigate space needs and use expertise to resolve -
- 17 - P-233Q Need more SpEd Experience - What is Garth's Plan to enhance D75 student experience -
- 18 - PA Pres BX - Expressed concern what's Garth To experience BUSIAG coordination -
- 19 - Says D75 tightly packaged organization
- 20 - Parent wants better communication and more PD or teachers -
- 21 - Parent, concerned about SpEd experience and Busing issue -
- 22 - Parent support D75 Programs -
- 23 - P138M lack of services - Busing is a concern - Teacher training - Excellence Disapprove Chancellor's award from NYU -

24 - Parent of student being abused - needs help -
What school is that?

25 - Ed Assistan DTS - Does Consolidation mean cuts?

26 - Parent - IEP Busing issues respect Mandate?

27 - Parent - Artistic child, concerned about Budget
Cuts, Parent ~~at~~ collaboration with
Budget

28 - P138 M - PTA sec - invited Bath to school.

29 - Parent expressed concerned about changes and how
they effect everyone Parent, Teachers, students
Communicate changes before implementation

30 - PS255 Q - Concerned about space and
utilization, being students together -

31 - DTS Acting Top Principal of SpEd -
Concerned about cuts, consolidation
Re-Org, Fix for Compliance of IEP
To improve system -

Wants DOE to be judged by commitment
to SpEd -

Ellen motion
Pat seconded