



Citywide Council on Special Education

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06/17/2009 CALENDAR MEETING MINUTES

The Calendar Meeting of the Citywide Council on Special Education was held on Wednesday, June 17, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. at Tweed Courthouse, 52 Chambers Street Manhattan, New York 10007

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 Gonslves	Present

2. Secretary's Report – Charles Henderson

5/20/09 Calendar and 5/13/09 Working Meeting Minutes Approved

3. Report of the President – John Englert

John Englert, President of CCSE wrote (emailed) Joel Klein, Chancellor inquires he had within D75 and invited the Chancellor to speak to the parents and council during the Calendar Meeting. The Chancellor declined and responded to John concerns within D75:

- o Recommendations from Garth Harries regarding Special Education (D75)
- o Roles and Responsibilities of the DOE
- o Transition
- o Stimulus Funds: The Basic purposes of the Federal Stimulus funds is to replace funds lost in the economic downturn over the past several years
We have effectually preserve D75's funding so we are steering our funding in other parts of the DOE.

4. Report of the Superintendent- Bonnie Brown:

In response to John's inquires to the stimulus funding Bonnie Brown, D75 Superintendent mentioned that D75 budget cut was .0001 percent out of 800 million compared to gen. ed. John asked if it was .0001 this year what was it last year and wasn't it the same percentage that equals to 4 million and seems to be growing every year?

Bonnie mentioned (During her attendance/discussion at the CSA Consolation) the principals within the DOE have the ability to decide as to how to spend their allocations (PS: Personnel Service to OTPS). D75 is administered differently; principals have less latitude and can not move money from OTPS to PS. The reason any accruals went into what is called within the ISC Transfer Utilities. The budget from OMB for next year is 680 million and the projected cost based on D75 register is 707 million (short 27 million). They take those accruals and use it to fund things as the school year progress however D75 register peeks in March, allowing D75 to increase classes (as long as the students are accounted for in the register). If the students are not on the register due circumstances D75 has to close a few classes and the funds are placed into the Transfer Utilities and are redeployed. Principals (Gen. Ed) are empowered to make choices with their allocated funds but D75 principals are not allowed the same latitude. There will be future conversations providing more latitude granted to D75 principals decision making regarding their allocations.

Within D75 five Principals are retiring and there are three vacancies for Network Leaders. 2009-10 school year Bonnie wants to realign the schools after looking at the data and the process is finalized there will be a co-hort of schools: Elementary Standardized Alternate, M.S. & H.S. Network, Autism Network and Career & Task Network.

Inclusion: 2009-10 school year in terms to inclusion students articulating from a bench mark grade level to another who are in inclusion will stay in inclusion and will go through articulation at the placement office and will articulate into an inclusion program through their home zone school or district. When the students are ready to go into Gen. Ed. they will remain within their neighborhood. Ellen questioned this decision: as a parent whose child is in a successful district and to be move into an unsuccessful district parents will not agree with this.

Transition: Bonnie will be hiring a director of transition and two transition coaches. After meeting with the principals of the Occupational Centers (formally 721's) and the principals of the transitioning centers and high school programs Bonnie will change the format of those schools. Students 14 to 16 will go to Career Developments (811's) and will receive their functional reading and math, related services and social skills. Students 16 to 18; functional math, skills training and start to faze students out of related service as well as travel training to their job sites. Students 18 to 21; will articulate to the Transition Centers.

5. End of Year Report:

1. We started the year by receiving the Council on Great City School Report which was issued in August of 2008. This was the report in which it was determined that there was a bifurcation of special education management inherent in Central DOE. District 75 leadership and their constituents including President's Council, the CCSE, DLT, etc... crafted a response to the Chancellor and Deputy Chancellor.
2. At the same time school was opening and cuts and changes in bussing and routes were taking place. Unfortunately, the OPT wasn't very forthcoming at all with this information.
3. We inquired about the absence of C4E funds for District 75. The Dept. told us that the cost per District 75 student was much greater than children in the Community School District and that the District's budget wasn't cut as much as other School Districts. Unfortunately, we were the only ones that thought this reasoning was unacceptable.
4. We were informed that there was actually a surplus of monies in the amount of \$800K as a result of a shortage of therapists to fulfill RSA's. Unfortunately, we were the only ones that asked to modify the pay scale and look at other ways to increase the hourly rate of the therapists.
5. We began to engage the Dept. in dialogue to include special education. We seek to measure the ability, not the disability. These conversations not only included Deputy Chancellor Lyles, but also Becky Cort of VESID, Regent Tisch and Carmen Alvarez.
6. As always, we commented on the Five Year Capital Plan 2010-2014. Unfortunately, we and 28 other CEC's never received a response to their comments.
7. Along with D75 leadership, we also commented on the Special Ed Handbook which was developed by DOE. A resource was being developed to help parents of special needs children navigate the system. Good, bad or indifferent, an attempt was being made to help parents. At this time, the final draft is in publication.
8. While all of this was going on, this Council was making their voices heard and attending the Panel for Educational Policy Meeting every month and speaking on behalf of special education and District 75. Then something unbelievable happened: Special Education was added to the Agenda.
9. The Dept. makes an announcement in the beginning of the year about SESIS, a special education management information system which will bring IEP's online and improve the DOE's record keeping. This represents a huge investment of \$55 million plus another \$28 million in DOE consulting fees for an off the shelf program.
10. We continue to attend meetings and write letters demanding a response to the District's comments on the Council on Great City School Report. What do they do? They introduce Garth Harries. Without any special education experience, he begins an efficiency initiative to look at special education across all of the Districts.
11. Once again, the CCSE begins the dialogue. We speak to Garth at the PEP meeting and invite him to our February Working and Calendar Meetings. D75 parents pack the auditorium of P177Q and tell Garth about their experiences with special education and their support for everything that D75 does.

12. The CCSE continues the dialogue by outreaching and facilitating joint meetings with Community School Districts and Garth Harries.

13. We're told about the Harlem Success Academy trying to push D75 programs out of 811M. We have a conference call with Cathy Nolan's office and D75 President's Council and voice our concerns. We attend the PEP Meeting and we call on the Chancellor to find common ground for D75 children at this facility. Bonnie Brown meets with Eva Moskowitz and the D75 programs are preserved at 811M.

14. Last month, we took time out and paid tribute to the NYC Public Advocate, Betsy Gotbaum for her tireless effort, dedication and commitment to special education.

15. So here we are in June:

- Deputy Chancellor Lyles has left or will be leaving shortly.
- Garth Harries has left or will be leaving shortly.
- Linda Wernikoff, Executive Director of the Office of Special Education Initiatives is retiring at the end of this month.
- We have a bunch of politicians in Albany that don't know how to behave.
- It is also obvious that they don't listen to parents.
- I say this because we have Mayoral Control sun setting in 2 weeks, which undoubtedly will be renewed through Shelly Silver's bill which still lacks the teeth necessary for the CEC's.

So where is the common thread?

Meeting adjourned at 9pm