

# Citywide Council on Special Education

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## **06/18/2008 CALENDAR MEETING MINUTES**

The Calendar Meeting Minutes of the Citywide Council on Special Education was held Wednesday, June 18, 2008 at 6:00pm located at P721K: Roy Campanella Occupational Training Center, 64<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11212. The following people were in attendance.

### **1. Roll Call**

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|-------------------------|---------|
| ➤ Charlene Carroll-Hall | Excused |
| ➤ John Englert          | Present |
| ➤ Charles Henderson     | Excused |
| ➤ Diana Marenfeld       | Present |
| ➤ Ellen McHugh          | Present |
| ➤ Tom Ryan              | Present |
| ➤ Patricia Connelly     | Present |
| ➤ Robin Murray          | Excused |

### **2. Secretary's Report- Approval of Meeting Minutes dated 05/21/08**

No Quorums: approval of 5/21/08 meeting minutes will be held at the next Calendar Meeting-July.

### **3. Report of the President- John Englert**

CEC'S Presidents meeting with Chancellor Klein last week discussion was dominated on the Budget Cuts and the impact it will have on the schools; as well as what Tweed and OFEA can do differently as to how to engage the CEC'S in the community. This will continue to be the topic of discussion in the future during Presidents Meetings.

The council has not been provided with the Great City Council of Schools Final Report for D75 and its recommendations. 2007-2008 District 75 received \$740 thousand out of the 256 million provided by Contracts for Excellence. After writing to the CFE regarding the allocations of monies for the 2008-2009 school year D75 is still not to receive monies listed on Contracts for Excellence fiscal year as of 5/22 discretionary allocations.

It also has come to the council's attention that students graduating this week from collaborative team teaching learning environment has not been placed into middle school as the beginning of this week. At The Children's School, PS375 CTT student placement, transition steps and auditions into middle school has not occurred. June 12<sup>th</sup> is the deadline to respond for appeal and parents are unaware of recourse that can be taken.

#### **4. Report of the Superintendent-Bonnie Brown**

Bonnie informed the council, Dr. Marsha Lyles, Deputy Chancellor Teaching and Learning has the report on Great City Schools a specific date of distribution has not been provided as of yet.

Dist. 75 are in the process of completing perspective portfolio regarding space needs for the next school year. D75 will be opening 10-12 new sites based on the needs for expanding the artistic and HS assessment programs as well as the new buildings that are opening and house d75 schools. There have been on going meeting with principals and the formation of a building council regarding the sharing of space and busing.

With the PBS Grant (for 2 years) D75 is looking for those new sites to evolve collogues, campus community and have other schools join the PBS Grant as new schools open. This will allow for D75 to have a common voice and shared expectations.

Individual students ELA and Math scores (not ready for public release) have show remarkable gains, official outcome will be issued at a later date.

D75 has not incurred any budget cuts and will remain in the same position as last year. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Living & Learning Grant (currently serves 6 schools) will not be provided to D75, the State Education Department has allocated the funds to Surr and Siny Schools. The Principals will use there surplus rollover funds to fund end of the day programs next year.

D75 has a 9<sup>th</sup> grade academy to help with the transition into high school and is looking to collaborate with a school in the Bronx as well as beefing up the transitional sites in Queens and the Bronx.

#### **5. New Middle School Enrollment Process for Special Education Students Sandy Ferguson, NYC Dept of Ed, Executive Director for Sp. Ed and Ellen Newman, NYC Dept of Ed, Executive Education for Sp. Ed. Enrollment.**

Patricia informed the parents it has come to the attention by concerned parents and the parent coordinator at the Children's School (372) that none of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade CTT students have been placed as of Monday. Placement is not confined to 372, other parent advocates around the city has also informed the council that D15 CTT Students were not placed as well as other Sp Ed programs in the community schools. What concerns the council is that two weeks after Gen Ed students were notified of their placement, SP Ed students in the same class room were not. According to Bonnie Brown, D75 Superintendent, students were placed as of today but no notifications were sent to the parents.

Mr. Ferguson informed the council and parents the challenges of changing the placement process with Sp Ed students. He explained the previous practices in the past consisted of: Student's preferences and real match in participation in the placement process didn't take place. Noticed there were contradictions: there were Dist. In which students participated in school based selection process all through the dist, and other dist were there was unclear participation who ever was the loudest got in found it to be true in old Region 8. Found others were excluded that placement happened and students were not part of the process if they had sp needs.

Mr. Ferguson explained the enrollment team has set out to create a much more comprehensive practice that engage student's preference and honor it to what ever degree as possible. To do a careful student by student analysis's to make sure that the services recommendation for students are included in the consideration. Included in the analysis is the process to determine the proximity, home dist and dist of attendance. Finding a balance was a challenge and took loner than anticipated. Ms. Newman chimed in they are trying to uniform practices that occur thought the city to put the SP needs students on equal footing with the Gen Ed peers. Tom stated that Mr. Ferguson and Ms. Newman did not answer the questions as to what went wrong during the placement process, what are you going to do to fix it and why were the Sp Ed kids not treated with the same respect as the Gen Ed kids and placed later. Mr. Ferguson explained the placement process for Sp Ed students was more involved than anyone participated and more time was needed than anticipated. We needed to release more information to get the process in June happening until we could get the correct information they were ready not to go out.

Ellen asked who is responsible at the school level to get the information too. Mr. Ferguson replied, the first layer is the middles school liaison or guidance counselor collects the application and information. On each application was indication of the services and was to be verified by the guidance counselors and what we found was that information was not dependable. The issue of the inputting updated information into the ATS. IEP updates were not matching in the ATS/Cap System and grade codes are entered incorrectly, per Ms. Newman.

Bonnie Brown mentioned that principals receiving D's on their school report cards and the way to improve their school is to lower class size and the way to do it is to have less Sp Ed students, less inclusion from D75, less CTT Classes. Who holds the principals accountable, there are other issues competing for space. There will be practices and protocols in place as well as clear lines of communication, kids in inclusion classes in D75 will go through OCEP and Amanda Smith and the Director of Inclusion at D75 and the issue of downsizing will go through John White at portfolio.

**6. Preliminary Allocation Plan for the Contracts for Excellence: Roberto E. Tillman, Assistant Director for Citywide Schools-ISC: Queens**

Ellen asked guest speaker, Sandy Brawer, ISC-Deputy Executive Director will D75 be receiving any of the allocated funds for the coming school year. Mr. Brawer explained due to the economy down turn the city was faced with reductions schools (cuts) received a 1.7 % of the budget and no d75 school received any reduction. This year the department of Ed received 129 million from the city and a 135 million from the state. The costs has gone up totaling 963 million, a large amount going to labor and contract changes as well as the cost of food, transportation, teacher and principal training, new schools and transfer schools. The money allocated does not cover the 963 million and there is a 299 million gap. 200 million in cuts within the DOE left schools were impacted with 99 million dollars in reductions. All Gen Ed schools have received across the board a reduction of 7.5%, dist 75 schools will not received any cuts and will maintain at the same level. Funding in Gen Ed schools are based on the amount of students where as in D75 it is based upon programs. Contracts for Excellence allocated monies covers class size reductions, full extended year programs, Pre-K which D75 already has. All of the CFE monies are allocated are allocated towards schools based upon students and not programs. If the monies are allocated to the D75 then D75 would have to take on their share of the 7.5% cut. Ellen stated there was an article that suggested there was a Surr Plus. 63 million that is still in question that the Mayor and Chancellor are waiting from the state will D75 have access to those funds? An analysis was conducted by the Campaign on Fiscal Equity the DOE planned to spend more state dollars on rich successful schools that the law allows. Despite the fact the DOE states they are in favor in cutting rich schools, when their not. Mr. Brawer replied, as of right now the purchasing power for schools have minus of 1.4% and others schools as high as 6.00%. CFE regulations carry restrictions for the 535 million allocated. Only 150 million are restriction free. He Chancellor is holding back until a decision is made and thereafter will determine on how to distribute the 63 million. In the past the funding was based upon positions/salaries it is reverse and based upon students needs. John mentioned last year NYC received 256 million for CEF that was allocated to 1072 schools in 32 dist. plus D75 you just indicated that in 2008-2009 that 129 million was coming form the city and 535 million the state. Additional monies this year was roughly 664 million. D75 falls into the category of the guidelines and needs.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:30pm