

Citywide Council on Special Education

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

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11/14/2007 Calendar Meeting Minutes

The Calendar Meeting Minutes of the Citywide Council on Special Education was held Wednesday, November 14, 2007 at 6:30 pm located at P721Q: Queens Occupational Training Center, 57-12 94th Street, Elmhurst, Queens, 11373. The following people were in attendance.

1. Roll Call

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

Before the meeting began John Englert, President of CCSE thanked and introduced the Principal of P721Q, Madeline Hassell and the Parent Coordinator for having the CCSE at P 721Q. John mentioned that it's customary for CCSE to hold their meetings at P721Q before the Thanksgiving holiday. John called the meeting to order and Charlene did the roll call.

2. Secretary's Report- Approval of Meeting Minutes dated 10/17/07

A motion was made by Tom Ryan to approve the meeting minutes, Diana 2nd and the minutes were approved by CCSE.

3. Presidents Report- John Englert

There were a couple of items that John reported on. They were as follows:

- a. The Proposed 2007 Amendment of the Five Year Capital Plan has been published and can be found on the DOE website. It is broken down by borough and by school. Comments are welcomed to the CCSE no later than the end of the year so that they can prepare their

response. Please note that the DOE will accept comments up until 1/15/08. Depending upon the public comment, a hearing may take place within six weeks at the CCSE Long Island City Office. We will keep you posted as soon as we know when the meeting will take place.

- b. Last month we mentioned the formation of the CEC workgroups that were being convened by OFEA. The purposes of the workgroups were to discuss policy and decision making. Council members Patricia and John attended the meeting and the first round of the meeting was not very organized. John commented that he hopes that the next meeting will be better organized.
- c. Currently there are two (2) vacancies on the CCSE. John mentioned there are applications available at the calendar meeting. If anyone was interested to fill out the application by 11/30/07 and send the completed application to Ramona, CCSE A.A. at the CCSE Office and at the District 75 Office.

4. Superintendents Report-Bonnie Brown

There were a couple of items that Bonnie reported on. They were as follows:

- a. Space: Bonnie and Gary have been meeting with Tweed concerning space planning and enrollment for next year. They are currently reviewing data to do a 5 year trend analysis. The following observations are being found:
 - o Increase in Alternate Assessment
 - o Decrease in ED
 - o Decrease in Vision and Hearing
 - o Increase of high school enrollment
 - o Increase of space for services: for speech, ADL and Physical Therapy

They are trying to develop a footprint for D75 so that there is sufficient space in the schools to perform mandated therapies for the children.

- b. Busing: The District is working with OPT on children's behavior and training classes for the bus drivers and matrons.
- c. Inquiry Teams have been visiting schools and collecting data. Pat Shubert will look into why there is a higher rate of referrals for District 75.

- d. Quality Reviews are in progress. Self Management schools have been graded well developed.
- e. The District is looking at ways to improve literacy. They have set-up Brigrance for Alternate Assessment. Inclusion Classes are increasing.

Bonnie stated as one of district 75 successes there has been and increase of usage of district 75 websites (1,500 visitors to date). There is more accessibility at District 75 Offices.

5. Discussion on Busing

John introduced Richie Scarpa, Director of Office Pupil Transportation, and Bill Hassick.

Mr. Scarpa pointed out that the beginning of the school year was horrible experience due to changes in the routes and contract negotiations with bus companies and the unions and the changes within OPT:

Escort Training: OPT has worked with CCSE and district 75 regarding Escort training finally at the point that they haired a insurance company to review the changes and after the review CCSE and District 75 will be brought back into the process.

GPS: In the last couple of years OPT has hired consultant to build a GPS System. There are 7, 000 buses on the road serving special and general education students. OPT is awaiting the final approval and there should be a pilot program within in a year and a half.

Newly Hires: due to the retirement of investigators, OPT hired 11 investigators: former employees of ACS, NYC detectives and military prosecutors. They will investigate bus complaints much more robust and professionally.

The Customer Service Center: OPT continues to work on the service by hiring an past employee who comes from a major retailer, also looking to hire people away from 311, added sift supervisors. Bring a lot of professional expertise in that area and will have more trainings for customer service.

Richie pointed out that there is a perception that OPTS is cutting busses to save money and it is not true. Over all for special ed. people who route regional and dist 75 the number of buses are down to 5 as of yesterday due to the lost of 500 students, currently there are 4,200 buses in service.

Parent coordinator of PS7Q brought up the issue of bus route changes, bus drivers complaints about delivering the student late to school and what are the procedures. Richie stated when there is a change in route travel letters

are sent home to inform the parent of the changes, the driver knows he is getting a child five days in advance. The drivers should report to the bus company and the bus company should report to OPT if there is a concern about arriving late to a school. The GPS system that should be in place within two years should provide OPT with the reason why the buses are arriving late to the pick up and drop off area.

Charlene asked if parents call customer service with the original complaint will the parent be re-issued a different complaint number. Richie stated parents should provide the original complaint number issued when the complaint was logged in. If you do not provide customer service with the original complaint number you will constantly receive a new one.

Richie Scarpa promised that he would provide data information to the council at a later date to review.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:30 pm