

# Citywide Council on Special Education

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## 10/17/2007 Calendar Meeting Minutes

The Calendar Meeting Minutes of the Citywide Council on Special Education was held Wednesday, October 17, 2007 at 6:30 pm located at the Tweed Courthouse, 52 Chambers Street, New York NY 10007. The following people were in attendance.

### 1. Roll Call

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

Before the meeting began John Englert, President of CCSE introduced DOE Guest in attendance at the Calendar meeting:

- Bonnie Brown, District 75 Superintendent
- Gary Hetch, Deputy Superintendent Dist 75
- Kathleen Grimm, Deputy Chancellor Finance and Administration
- Jeffrey Shear, Chief of Staff Finance and Administration
- Vincent W. Clark, Chief Executive Officer Integrated Service Center
- Ken Stark, Office of Support and External Partnerships
- Dr. Wells
- James Diaz, Chief of Staff, Teaching and Learning
- Ramona Garcia, CCSE Administrative Assistant

### 2. Secretary's Report- Approval of Meeting Minutes dated 6/13/07, 7/11/07, 8/8/07, & 9/19/07

A motion was made by Ellen McHugh to accept the outstanding Meeting Minutes. Charlene Carroll-Hall 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

### **3. Presidents Report - John Englert**

John Englert reported on the following:

- . As a follow-up to our last meeting regarding space, we've asked Kathleen Grimm, Deputy Chancellor of Budget and Finance to be here to address any concerns we may have. Furthermore, Pat Shubert is here from NY State Education Dept. – VESID should anyone require clarification on the State's position with regard to self-contained D75 schools.
- . Last month we had reported the formation of CEC workgroups being convened by OFEA that would meet monthly at round table working sessions with DOE staff to discuss policy and decision-making. The meetings will begin this Monday and the workgroup areas are:
  - . Student Achievement
  - . Special Education Service
  - . Budget
  - . ELL Service
  - . Outreach/Training
  - . Facilities
- a. There currently exist two (2) vacancies on the CCSE. We urge anyone that is interested to please complete the application and mail it to the District Office. The applications are at the door when you came in.
  - . Also at the door were flyers advertising an upcoming movie entitled, "Music Within". This is a true story based upon the beginning of the American Disabilities Act. Anyone who is interested in obtaining free tickets to the debut screening should see Ramona Garcia after this evening's meeting.

### **4. Superintendents Report - Bonnie Brown**

Bonnie Brown mentioned new initiatives that District 75 are focusing on by establishing teams (inquire and senior assessment) for accountability. The focus will be on the following:

#### **Needs of the School:**

Curriculum, SLT, Safer Environment, Related Services

#### **Quality Review:**

- Time Line: November to March
- SMS: Self Management Schools
- Best Practices
- Time Line: August to September - 3 schools moved from the list of trouble schools.

At this time Bonnie mentioned that they don't have a cohort leader, principals are given more autonomy within their schools, the problem of placing the right people into the school, they're not disbanding PDS.

Vincent Jeffery, Portfolio Committee Department is working on Specific Demographics, Data Collection, and Transfer Records.

Last week at a private meeting held by Marcia Lyles (Deputy Chancellor of Teaching & Learning) the implementation of the DOE's plan to move all Educational Vision Services (EVS) & Hearing Educational Service Divisions (HES) services to the direct control of individual Principals at the school level was discussed. In attendance were Bonnie Brown (District 75 Superintendent), Helen Kaufman (Lead Regional Administrator for Citywide Programs, District 75), Dr. Lawrence Gardner (Director of Educational Vision Services) and various DOE principals. In response to the outcry among parents of blind and visually impaired students, Bonnie Brown had reported that this was in response to concerns raised by principals a year ago that blind and deaf children in their respective schools were adversely affecting test scores results. Consideration of possible changes to Educational Vision Services and hearing Educational Services began. The principals felt that it was unfair that they be held accountable for the test scores for students whose academic programs they have no control over. Those early conversations eventually led to the meeting held on October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The CCSE requested information from the meeting. Bonnie stated that Mr. Diaz, Chief of Staff to Deputy Superintendent Dr. Lyles's took notes at the meeting and will provide them for Maria Garcia and the Council who would then forward them to all interested parties, Mr. Diaz agreed.

Bonnie Brown also addressed the closing of self contained vision classes across the city, saying that due to advances in Medical Care there are fewer blind and visually impaired students entering the system; hence, fewer referrals and the need for fewer classes. CCSE member, Maria Garcia reminded Bonnie Brown that her statement was based on incorrect information. Data from the Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (State Agency for the Blind) supports that there are more hearing and visually impaired students entering the system not fewer.

Ms. Garcia proceeded to clarify; advances in Medicine have resulted in a higher survival rate amongst premature infants including micro-preemies and a correspondingly higher increase in enrollment of cortically blind students in school systems across the nation.

Ms. Brown stated that Principals complained that they felt unwelcome in the self-contained classes. Maria Frieda, Queens EVS Supervisor responded by pointing out the self contained classroom teachers, students and their parents have been historically unwelcome and has not been included in the cultural of the General Education buildings that house them, not the other way around.

Ms. Lawson, parent of a seeing impaired student asked Ms. Brown to refute the rumor that the DOE plans to dismantle Educational Vision Service. Ms. Brown said she would not use the word dismantle. CCSE Member, Ms. Garcia stated the DOE is currently instructing fewer than 10% of the legally blind students with Braille and the DOE does not require a learning media assessment of kindergarten students entering the system to determine the most appropriate learning media for student. New students are instead automatically placed on a large print tract which will result in functional illiteracy for most if not all legally blind students. Parents and members of EVS voiced their concerns as to what is taking place. Ms. Brown repeatedly reiterate her opinion that the situation was well in hand. The DOE and Dist. 75 are qualified to determine the final out come of Vision and Hearing Education Services. Ms. Garcia asked for a commitment from the DOE as well as District 75 to involve parent representatives and the CCSE in all future discussions of changes to the administration of services to seeing and hearing impaired students within the NYC Education (DOE) there was no reply.

#### **5. Review of Resolution No 3.-NYC Family Guide**

John read CCSE Resolution #3 - NYC Family Guide Booklet and mentioned that the Resolution had been passed by most of the CEC's. John reported to the audience that before the meeting, a revised undated NYC Family Guide was presented to him by Mr. Duran of the OFEA Office incorporating the contact information for District 75. John informed the public that the booklet did not have a revision date and there was no way for parents to determine the latest and most accurate booklet published. John recommended that a revised booklet be published incorporating the comments noted in the Resolution. After reading the Resolution, the CCSE was requested by the public to add a notation for new translated versions of the revised NYC Family Guide for non-English speaking parents to be published.

Ellen McHugh made a motion to accept the Resolution as revised by the Public. Charlene Carroll Hall 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. The Resolution was passed unanimously and is attached along with the CCSE's request to republish the NYC Family Guide.

#### **6. Vacancy on CCSE**

John announced that there were two (2) vacancies on the CCSE and there were Vacancy Applications and flyers on the table for parents who wish to apply. John also mentioned that the deadline for applying to the CCSE is Nov. 30, 2007. If anyone had any questions to call the CCSE office and speak to the Administrative Assistant, Ramona Garcia.

## **7. Overview of School and Special Education Support**

Prior to Ken Stark speaking on the above topic, Kathleen Grimm spoke regarding the Five Year Capital Plan and the school areas in which she is responsible for. Kathleen Grimm is the Deputy Chancellor for Finance and Operations, transportation, school facilities, school food, ISCs, and all things administrative fall under her auspices. Next month, Richie Scarpa from OPT will be speaking to the CCSE.

Currently, there are 63K new seats being built in the plan. This consists of Capital Improvement Projects, electrical, heating, roofing and major system upgrades. Repairs are graded from a scale of 1-5, with 4's & 5's being the worst cases. The current plan addresses the 5's and some of the 4's. The Five Year Capital Plan should be published by the beginning of November and the CEC's will be required to comment. Kathleen indicated that her staff and she would be happy to visit a CCSE meeting to review any questions they may have.

Primary Supports for Special Education:

1. Office of Special Education Initiatives (Central Office)
2. Integrated Service Centers (ISC)
3. Office of Student Enrollment, Planning, and Operations (OSEPO)
4. Committee on Special Education (CSE)
1. Office of Special Education Initiatives
  - Situated in the Central Office within the Division of Teaching and Learning.
  - Serves as a major support organization for schools, School Support Organizations and Integrated Service Centers.
  - Responsibilities relate to improvement of outcomes for struggling students and students with disabilities as outlined in Children's First.
  - Fills several key roles:
    - . Policy Development
    - . Replication of "Best Practices"/Capacity Building
    - a. Technical Assistance/Special Education School Improvement
    - . Deployment of Resources
2. Integrated Service Center (ISC)
  - Provides one-stop assistance with administrative and support functions to successfully provide special education services.
3. Office of Student Enrollment, Planning, and Operations (OSEPO)
  - To provide support, a number of staff have been assigned to OSEPO:
    - a. Director of Special Education Enrollment

- b. Borough Directors of Special Education Enrollment
- c. Placement Officers
- d. Attendant support personnel
- Roles of these members include:
  - a. Placement services for students with disabilities who require a placement in a special education or collaborative team teaching class outside of their current school.
  - b. Monitoring of enrollment data to open new special education classes when and where needed.
  - c. Ensuring the participation of students with disabilities in choice programs throughout NYC.
- 0. Committee on Special Education (CSE)
  - Primary roles include:
    - a. Providing evaluation services for students in non-public, parochial and charter schools and those not attending NYC public schools.
    - b. Maintaining the Committees on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) and the Hearing Handicapped/Visually Impaired (HHVI) evaluation teams.
    - c. Collaborating with OSEPO to place students, including continuing to log in all referrals for evaluation for students in public and non-public schools.

*Meeting adjourned at 9:00pm*