

Citywide Council on Special Education

Thursday, April 7, 2022

Business Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

The Meeting was called to order by Co-President Ellen McHugh at 6:16 pm.

Roll Call

Cynthia Arbulu Vacca	Excused
Julie Barreto	Present
Sanyi Beckeles-Canton	Present
Carolyn Castro	Present
Wenming Chen	Present
Heather Dailey	Present
Artelia Flowers	Present
Paullette Healy	Present
Lauretta Joseph	Present
Ellen McHugh	Present
Erika Newsome	Present

Interpreters introduced themselves.

Nava Bahrapour was appointed Timekeeper.

Approval of Minutes – January 6 & 20, 2022

Erika Newsome moved and Ellen McHugh seconded to approve minutes of January 6 & 20. There was a roll call vote and the six members in attendance at the time voted yes to approve the minutes.

Approval of Minutes – February 3 & 17, 2022

Ellen McHugh moved and Wenming Chen seconded to approve the minutes of February 3 and 17. There was a roll call vote and the seven member in attendance voted – six yes and one abstention.

Approval of Minutes – February 23, 2022

Carolyn Castro moved and Lauretta Joseph seconded to approve the minutes of February 23, 2022. There was a roll call vote and the seven members in attendance voted – five voted yes and two abstained. The vote did not pass.

Co-Presidents' Report

Erika Newsome

- Concern that there in some D75 schools, there is no PTA representation for the parents of D75 students. Will bring this up to FACE as well as the Office of Special Education.

Ellen McHugh

- There is a meeting tonight on Chancellor's Regulation 37 on the selection of Superintendents. The CCSE is not part of the process but is invited to attend the meetings.
- The Art Contest deadline has passed and the artwork will be shared with the judges shortly.
- The DOE Special Education Family Day will be moved to the end of May.
- Attended a meeting about suspensions and the campaign to avoid suspensions because research has shown, that for most part, it doesn't improve the student's behavior.
- A CEC Elections Committee has been formed to discuss the voting process for parents voting for CEC Council Members. Voting has to be done through the child's NYCSA Account. Only the parent with access to the NYCSA account can vote. If there is a two parent home or more than one child in the family, the family has to decide how/who to submit their vote.
- Everything is still up in the air about the Impartial Hearing Office (IHO) taking over the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH). Juby Shapiro of TAFKID has reached out to CCSE to collaborate in opposing this.
- Chancellor has confirmed that he will be in attendance at our June 2 business meeting. Details are being worked on as well as the questions.
- District 15 is creating a inclusive school (PS958) for 3, 4 and 5 year olds. Programs include – ICT, AIMS and Horizons.
- Attended a rally with PIST (Parents to Improve School Transportation).

There was a pause in the agenda

Jose announced that he was leaving the DOE to work with the City's Commission on Human Rights as the Executive Director of Communications and Marketing. Council Members praised, congratulated and thanked Jose for all his support to CCSE.

Member Reports

Francine Almash

- CCHS is having their business/calendar meeting next week at Tweed. The Chancellor will attend for the first 30 minutes.
- There are two resolutions that the CCHS will discuss – one about languages other than English and class size reduction.

Nava Bahrampour

- Would like to start a sub-committee to address the concerns of non-verbal students not qualifying for AAC (augmented alternative communication) devices.
- Has concerns about the negative conversations from some CEC members about students with learning or physical disabilities.
- Running for the vacant student spot on PEP

Paullette Healy

- Concerned that traditional high schools receive funding for their enrolled students based on the enrollment cutoff date. Whereas transfer schools, that don't have a enrollment cutoff date, don't receive funding or not enough funding to support not only general education students but students with IEP's as well.
- Attended a meeting discussing the new schools slated to open in District 20 in 2024. There will be two middle school sites providing 200 seats for D75 students specifically and one elementary school providing 40 seats.
- Visited a school with a D75 high school and D75 K-two on campus. Parents are concerned that five year old students are sharing the bus route with 16-17 year olds. Need to look into ways to change that before something happens.

Julie Barreto

- Attended a D75 meeting with Matt Berlin of NYCSBUS presenting on busing. One of the items discussed was including a GPS and app so that parents are able to keep track the bus and know how long and how far the bus is from the school or home. Will need to train the parents.

Heather Dailey

- Following up on an earlier conversation about the CEC 25 President making negative comments about special education students. It has been reported that the President has been asked to step down,
- Have been seeing an increase in busing complaints. From no matron on bus to driver absences to parents being asked to pick up their own kids. Glenn Risbrook of OPT has been able to help solve some of the issues.
- Concerned that the Borough Central Offices (BCO) are being closed and how the restructuring will support parents.
- Various parent groups received an email from John Hammer informing them that if they have problems accessing the NYCSA account, they can reach out to Special Education via email at specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov.

IEP Conference Recap

- There was a brief discussion on how the conference turned out. Positive feedback about and from the presenters as well as attendees.

Annual Report

- Members have received their assignments. Co-President Newsome went over the purpose of the annual report.

Remaining Meeting Schedule

- In-person meetings are scheduled to resume after April 15. There hasn't been any talk about hybrid meetings and whether or not members can participate from home and not be penalized. The concern is about crime in the City, specifically against the Asian community and will our Asian members feel safe traveling to and from meetings. AA Morgan will look into car service companies as well as reach out to FACE/SGO about to see if the Council can pay for this (outside of member reimbursement) out of the budget.
- AA Morgan has scheduled the rest of the 2021-2022 meetings at Tweed. Since the Governor's waiver of in-person meetings have been decided on a monthly basis, it was better to book at Tweed and cancel than to book at a location and have to cancel at the last minute.
- Ellen McHugh moved and Paullette Healy seconded to go with the recommended meeting schedule at Tweed. There was a roll call vote and the nine members in attendance voted yes.
- Because the scheduled calendar meeting on April 21 falls in the middle of spring break, the Council voted to change the meeting to Friday, April 29. Ellen McHugh moved and Heather Dailey seconded to move the meeting to April 29. There was a roll call vote and of the nine members in attendance six voted yes and three abstained. The vote passed.

Member Reimbursements

- Everyone was reminded to submit their reimbursements.

Resolutions

- MetroCards – there was a discussion about a resolution that is floating around. The Council felt that it is too restrictive and doesn't take into account the needs of special needs students. The Council will draft their own resolution to incorporate parts of the old resolution and their own concerns.
- AA Salary – there was a brief discussion on increasing the AA starting salaries. There are 14 open positions and the starting salary is \$30,000.

SEED Initiative

- Nava will be visiting a SEEDS (Sensory Education Exploration and Discovery) site in Brooklyn. Asked members to share questions that can be brought to the Related Services Team regarding the future of the SEEDS program for high school students.
- There was a description of a SEEDS site for elementary/middle school students which is a sensory gym that includes swings, a rock wall, crawl tunnel, trampolines, mats, weighted blankets.
- Looking to have a sensory gym geared toward the teenager, with an emphasis on social emotional learning, equipment for older children to use. Will take pictures of the room to see what can be modified to support high school students.

Meeting with Chancellor Banks

- Will set up a separate meeting to discuss the questions and logistics for meeting with Chancellor.

Heather Dailey moved and Carolyn Castro seconded to create a subcommittee on ableism and inclusivity. There was a roll call vote and the eight members in attendance voted yes.

Action Items to complete

- Ellen McHugh to write letter on OATH
- Carolyn Castro to draft the resolution on MetroCards
- Letter on access to language programs.

Paulette Healey moved and Ellen McHugh seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned – 9:23 pm