

# Citywide Council on Special Education

Thursday, February 3, 2022

## Business Meeting Minutes

### Call to Order

The Meeting was called to order by Co-President Ellen McHugh at 6:13 pm.

### Roll Call

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

Interpreters introduced themselves.

Council Members introduced themselves, their district and child's special needs category.

Carolyn Castro was appointed Timekeeper.

### **Approval of Minutes** – November 18, 2021

Ellen McHugh moved and Paullette Healy seconded to table the minutes until the next meeting.

### **Co-Presidents Reports**

Ellen McHugh

- Former CCSE Member Tamara Foye is working on a community project to collect items and donations for children in a neonatal unit. The event runs from January 29 to February 9. If anyone would like to donate, contact me.
- Letter to Mayor Adams – would like to have a sub-committee work/draft the letter.

- Parents in Support of Student Transport (PIST) is having an event tomorrow. Currently, it's up in the air whether it will be in-person or virtual. Decision will be made in the morning.
- There will be an ARISE meeting on February 17 @3:00 pm.
- There is a new FACE liaison – Tamika Nurse-Carter. CCSE made two requests
  - To invite the new Chancellor to the IEP Conference. Unfortunately, he's not available. Will extend invitation to Deputy Chancellor Quintana.
  - Invited OPT to next meeting – not available.
- The Graduation Coalition will meet with Regent Ruth Turner on February 8 to discuss the requirements for graduation and unhooking the regents from graduation requirement.
- The Resolution on School Governance, formally known as the Resolution on Mayoral Control. The final copy has been shared with other CEC's. There seems to be some interest in our idea five parents elected, five parents appointed by Boro Presidents and one rep from each Citywide Council (CELL, CCHS and CCSE).
- There has been discussions and concerns about the transferring the Office of Impartial Hearing to the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings. A group of IHO's (Impartial Hearing Officers) filed a complaint saying that the DOE did not provide sufficient time for people (CCSE and families) to comment on policy changes that affect students with disabilities. Complaints may result in lawsuits or injunctions and the CCSE may be asked to speak to the issues.
- Reached out to the Public Advocates Office to invite to the IEP Conference and Deputy PA Nick Smith will attend. Also reached out to John Liu and Michael Benedetto's offices.

#### Erika Newsome

- Sent out a survey to CCSE members to sign up for the IEP Conference and Annual Report Sub-Committees, as well assign different members to work with and establish relationships with the districts. It was suggested that members limit themselves to two committees not to overextend themselves.
- Attended a D75 Council meeting and discussed the CCSE & D75 Councils work together in advocating for students with special needs and disabilities. Both Councils have similar concerns and look forward to the opportunity to support each other.
- In the process of updating the website.

## Member Reports

### Nava Bahrapour

- Met with John Hammer and Suzanne Sanchez regarding her SEED (Sensory Education Exploration and Discovery) policy initiative to expand the number of SEED facilities, the exposure that MIT research students get and to expand the program to include high schools students. Asked if someone would like to work with her to create a PowerPoint presentation for her next meeting with Hammer & Sanchez and SEED facilitators.
- Heather Dailey also mentioned that regarding the SEED expansion, that maybe the Council can assist with sending out a survey to the high schools to get an idea of the sensory needs.
- Augmented Alternative Communication (AAC) technology is used to help non-speaking people communicate. Concerned that there are more students who need AAC than receive AAC. Would like to set up a committee to discuss the AAC shortage, who qualifies to receive AAC and training.
- Cynthia Arbulu Vacca suggested that the real issue is not knowing the difference between an AAC device and an Assistive Technology (AT) device. Maybe someone from the AT community can present at our IEP conference or an upcoming calendar meeting.

### Heather Dailey

- Parents in Support of Student Transport (PIST) is having an event on February 4 – dubbed Transit Equity Day (in honor of Rosa Parks birthday) to bring attention to what's been happening with school busing. Scheduled to speak will be someone from the State Assembly and Elizabeth Kennedy from the Public Advocate's Office.
- Busing for special education recovery won't start until March. John Hammer reported that they were drafting an emergency contract for the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) to review. The PEP rescheduled their meeting to February 17 but the proposals that they will be reviewing does not include the emergency contract. Concerned that the contract will not happen.
- Concerned that some teachers and related services staff working the special education recovery program have not been paid and are hesitant to sign up again because of this. This may cause a shortage. Just wanted to make you aware.

### Cynthia Arbulu Vacca

- Adding to Heather Dailey's report – pointed out the Special Education Recovery Services is supposed to follow a child's IEP including literacy and math. Some parents are saying that the special education teacher only cover their specific subject.
- Suggested maybe working with IEP reps to send out a survey to parents to see what services their child is receiving.

- Attended INCLUDEnyc's virtual meeting. Was able to chat one-on-one with exhibitors and get information.
- Very excited that Chancellor Banks announced that they are looking into providing dyslexia schools for the public school system. Several proposals have been submitted.
- Carolyn Castro – Hearing that parents only received notification of a start date. Not what services or subject matter their child was receiving. This can be a question on the survey.
- Heather Dailey – Suggested asking parents on the survey if they received progress reports on how their child was doing during the recovery program.
- Carolyn and Cynthia will work on the survey.

### Carolyn Castro

- Adding to Cynthia Arbulu Vacca's report – One school per borough will be designated a school for dyslexia students.
- Concerned that students who are not classified as “dyslexic” but with a language or learning disability will not qualify to attend the school.
- In email communication with the Handwriting Collaborative regarding a recent conference on writing expressive disorder. The video of the conference will be released soon and I will review and report back to the Council on the findings.
- Will be attending the Everyday Reading Conference on March 5

Ellen McHugh shared information from the IBO (Ellen can you please share that with me and I'll attach it to the minutes)

### Paullette Healy

- On a working team with FACE on rewriting Chancellor's Regulation A655 - Which stipulates what School Leadership Teams (SLT's) and District Leadership Teams (DLT) roles and responsibilities are in accordance with state regulation and state law.
- The rewrite will to give a Title1 school a representative on the SLT.
- Title1 is a designation given to a school when they have over 60% of their families or population that they serve living below the poverty line. They receive federal funding.
- Hope to have it ready for public comment by end of March and present to PEP (Parents for Education Policy) in April.
- Attended a meeting with related services providers and speech pathologists. There is a huge waitlist for speech assessments for all grades because there is a shortage of speech pathologists. Someone suggested that they allow speech language pathologist assistants to help with assessments to alleviate the backlog and help them earn credit towards their certification.

Francine Almash

- CCHS will have their next meeting on February 9 @6:00 pm.
- Will be presenting two resolutions – one on school governance and one to cap charter schools.
- We're also discussing the issues around recovery services at the high school level. Asking High School superintendents to report back as to how much recovery services are happening at their schools.
- The CCHS along with CCELL, CCSE and D75 wrote a letter to Chancellor Banks to introduce themselves. All Councils have not signed off on it yet.
- The CCHS also wrote another letter to the Chancellor asking for more funding for the CCHS. There was discussion and differing opinions. The letter was updated to remove the request for more funding for CCHS specifically and asked for increased funding for all Citywide Councils.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### **2022 Meeting Schedule/Open Meetings Law**

- If the Governor does not extend the waiver for in-person meetings, the February 17 meeting is booked at Tweed for the next calendar meeting. The business meetings for March, April, May and June have also been booked at Tweed.
- Members will secure locations in their districts for the calendar meetings. Carolyn Castro (District 4 – March meeting), Heather Dailey (District 25 or 30 – May meeting) and Erika Newsome (District 8 – April meeting) volunteered to reach out or to provide AA school contacts to call. Ellen McHugh will look into Staten Island for the June meeting.
- Hybrid Meetings – There was a brief discussion on whether to or how to hold hybrid meetings. Can meeting locations accommodate us with equipment? Because members are required to be in-person, do they have the devices? More research and discussion are needed.

#### **Member Reimbursements**

- Members were reminded to submit their reimbursements.

#### **Vacant Officer Position (Joseph Xing resignation)**

- Erika Newsome suggested that instead of members moving up on the Council and changing their roles midway, have an election to give the new Council members a chance to take on an officer role. The election will take place at the next calendar meeting on February 17.

## **New Business**

- Carolyn Castro suggested having a presentation on specialization for dyslexic students in schools. Discuss what does that mean, who qualifies, why only one school per borough? Have CCSE input on the policy change. Please refer to the recording (01:59:17) for the in-depth discussion.
- ACS Resolution – Council Members reviewed. Paullette Healy moved and Carolyn Castro seconded to accept the resolution. There was discussion. Please refer to the recording (02:20:48) for the in-depth discussion. Paullette Healy moved and Cynthia Arbulu Vacca seconded to table the resolution until it is revised.
- SEED Policy – Erika Newsome moved and Carolyn Castro seconded to table until the February 17 meeting. There was a voice vote and all in attendance said yes.
- Letter to Chancellor Banks – The Council reviewed the letter and there was discussion. Paullette Healy moved and Ellen McHugh seconded to accept the letter as written. There was a roll call vote and there were eight yes and two members not present.
- Select members to be a judge on the Art Contest and the planning committee for the DOE Family Forum. Heather and Carolyn volunteered to work on the Family Forum. Erika previously agreed to volunteer to be a judge on the Art Contest.
- The Deputy Public Advocate has confirmed attendance at the IEP Conference. Bronx Assemblyman Michael Benedetto and Senator John Liu have also been invited. Ellen McHugh, Cynthia Arbulu Vacca and Carolyn Castro volunteered to be on the sub-committee. Ellen will send out three dates for the planning meeting to choose from.

Heather Dailey moved and Paullette Healy seconded to adjourn the meeting.

**Meeting Adjourned – 9:50 pm**