

# Citywide Council on Special Education

Thursday, November 4, 2021

## Business Meeting Minutes

### Call to Order

The Meeting was called to order by Co-President Ellen McHugh at 6:09 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
Paulette Healy	Present
Ellen McHugh	Present
Erika Newsome	Present
Joseph Xing	Absent

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

Cynthia Arbulu Vacca was appointed Time Keeper

Presentation – Recovery Program Part I

Christina Foti and John Hammer

Christina Foti started by apologizing for the lack of communication recently

### Co-President's Reports

#### **Erika Newsome**

- Expressed parents' concerns about students missing their services because of busing issues.
- Recently reviewed SLT notices about the increase of students in (???) and ICT. One solution to solve this problem was to send the students elsewhere. She will attend the November meeting to follow up.

## **Ellen McHugh**

- Attended a Zoom meeting on academic screenings and how to improve daily instruction.
  - Different reading samples – **Fino**??? Phonics
  - Reading fluency
  - Understanding vocabulary and comprehension
- Other issues discussed
  - Staffing shortages and remote learning
  - Low registration for school students – 100,000 have not yet attended class.
  - D75 students and technology
  - Universal Design for Learning (UDL) - it's a way for everybody to access learning.
- My Park Day – remodels a park to make it accessible to everyone, especially individuals with disabilities. On Sunday, November 21, the park on 106<sup>th</sup> and Amsterdam will be introduced to the community.
- High School Admission – HS admissions process will begin soon. There is concern about the reading and math scores since most students opted out of taking the test during the pandemic.
- Attended D16 Zoom meeting and they discussed Critical Love and how it will get families through the pandemic.
- Attended a City Council Hearing and big concern was about class size and how an increase would not benefit D75 students

There was a brief discussion about public comments during a business meeting (which are only allowed if Council invites). Because there were presenters during this business meeting, the public was invited to speak and there was confusion as to why. The Council decided that in future business meetings, if there is a presenter, the Council will announce that the public will only be able to speak during the presentation and not during the Council's business portion of the meeting.

## **Member Reports**

Paullette Healy - Attended a D75 DLT meeting

- Announced that the free limo service provided to families waiting for bus service route, cannot be used for short-term solutions. For example – bus drive sick. Parents are referred to paying for it them selves or getting a MetroCard from the school.
- There was also concern about the attendance of students who are having busing issues. How will it be handled? Is there a code in the system to indicate “busing issue” so that ACS is not called in because the student has been absent for several days?
- Parents still have not received their reimbursement from OPT for Summer Rising Program. Parents of Chapter 683 should resend their reimbursement form directly to the

D75 office to get expedited. Non D75 students attending Summer Rising will have to wait for OPT.

- Other issues
  - UFT Representative wanted to know if there is a way to keep the Para Nominations open the entire year so that they can fill para positions. D75 Superintendents will consider.
  - The Sub-Para Pilot Program
    - Had a discussion with Helen Kaufman about the structure of the program. Will meet with the general counsel on the legalities.
    - The Sub-Para Program would be for bus paras and medical paras and would fall under the direction of a non-profit such as New York City School Bus Umbrella Service (NYCSBUS). Will be meeting with CEO Matt Berlin to discuss. As an update, NYCSBUS has acquire all of Reliant Bus fleet as contracted.
- There will be a Special Education Forum regarding academic recovery hosted by District 20 President's Council and District 21 Title I DPAC on November 10.
- Testified at the Oversight Hearing mentioning that without a permanent remote option, reducing class size would not be feasible because there's just not enough room to do it.
- There has been some concern about the racial unrest in District 15 regarding the PS 295 Mural Justice Project. In this particular school building, there also resides an ASD Nest program and the students in this program are afraid because of the protests and graffiti outside of their school. The unrest as spread to MS 88, a school not involved. Superintendent Anita Skop, Executive Superintendent Karen Watts and Councilman Chaka are all aware and are looking for ways to protect and support the ASD Nest students as well as the D75 Co-Location program.

Heather Daily

Attended an oversight meeting with the City Council and busing continues to be a major problem

- Councilwoman Rosenthal reported that constituents in her district told her that they have been told to find their own busing.
- Councilman Tryeger asked how many students are without busing as of the meeting. There is an email floating around from Kevin Moran that as of September 13, every student who is enrolled has been assigned a bus. But not according to parents. Especially parents of Charter and Private school students.
- Have suggested that parents reach out to the Public Advocate's office if they have any issues.
- Mentioned that in her SLT meeting, they reported that recovery services will begin on December 15 but parents still need information to make a decision and the schools have not been able to provide.

- Have not heard anything about the SEED sites
- There was a rally at OPT. There was a little progress but there is still more to do.
- If your child gets vaccinated next week at one of the school pop up sites, they get a \$100 gift card.

#### Cynthia Arbulu Vacca

- Attended her high school's SLT meeting. Many parents are still having issues with busing two months into the school year. Parents are finding other ways of getting their kids to school – carpooling, private car services, taking them to school themselves. Parents have also not received reimbursement either.

#### Julie Barreto

- Recovery Services – through research found that parents can get additional services through a referral from a pediatrician.
- Shortage in Speech Therapists is because of the lack of vaccinated speech therapists. Most are doing telehealth.
- Parents can also request from the school a timesheet that keeps track of their child's services received, missed, why it was missed, was it made up.

#### Artelia Flowers

- Expressed a concern that because of the busing issues, some kids won't be able to participate in the Recovery Program and will continue to suffer because of lack of services. Also, the shortage of service providers is another concern.

#### Carolyn Castro

- Have not been receiving correspondence on SLT meetings.
- Son will start to receive recovery services soon. However, some parents/students in District 4 have not heard anything about their recovery services.
- Concerned with the Chancellor's Regulation that stipulates that "if you live in a district where you teach, you cannot offer services", unless you are issued a waiver. Searching to find out what the process is to get a waiver because we about to lose an OT that's working with one of our schools.
- Ellen McHugh suggested that she reach out to Mary Jo Ginese with the UFT to find out about the waivers.

- Also attended an IEP workshop in the Bronx. One of the discussions was to have Parent Coordinators assist families with the IEP process. Reach out to IncludeNYC to offer training.

#### Francine Almash – CCSE Rep on the CCHS

- High Schools Admission Guidelines have been released and there is not much information for students with disabilities. No information on the application process for the D75 Inclusion Program. Questions of concern - Will there be open forums for parents? Will parents be able to visit schools remotely or in-person?
- Other concerns – will D75 students be able to sit for the Specialize High School exams? What preparation and accommodations will be offered? Is there outreach to middle school students?
- What about homeschooled students? Again, not much info on the application process. A big concern is if you're a student with an IESP – student with a disability, because you were not in an ICT classroom, you are not considered disabled, therefore, you cannot be registered in the application process as a student with disabilities.
- Unfortunately, it will be tough to get the Citywide Council on High Schools to take up these issues on behalf of high school students with disabilities. Looking for help from other places.

#### **November & December Meetings**

- Ellen McHugh suggested that the Council invite someone to speak on the high school admissions process for the November calendar meeting.
- It was suggested to have a combined meeting for December.
- Paultette Healy mentioned the Governor's waiver for virtual meetings ending on January 15, 2022. Several CEC's have reached out to the CCSE to hold joint meetings in the new year. It was suggested to have a hybrid meetings. The issue with having the meeting at Tweed is the sound. The acoustics are really bad in the second floor conference room. Virtual attendees can't hear the meeting and room 119 does not have a sound system. An option would be for each member to have a laptop and headphones. The issue with that is not every member has a laptop, Tweed can't provide the laptops and the potential school locations may also not be able to provide laptops.

#### **Miscellaneous**

- Ellen still has three headphones. Asked who doesn't have – Julie, Heather and Carolyn.
- Please send contact info to AA Rose to put together a directory for the Council Members.

- Suggested having a separate email account, specifically for CCSE.
- Asked if info sent to Council Members helpful, is it worth sending. Yes but not everyday.
- Erika will set up designations so that CEC's from the different boroughs can reach out to a specific CCSE member with concerns from their borough.
- Council members who don't have their ID's must schedule an appointment. The system is updated daily with appointments just go on and schedule. Members who were previously on a Council can send the letter received from the AA and the ID on file will be mailed out to the member.

### **Member Reimbursement**

- AA Rose mentioned that the SGO rejected reimbursements because of requests for meals, missing receipts for internet services and taxes. Because the SGO is new and just had their training, Rose explained that members are not required to provide receipts, are eligible to get reimbursed for taxes and that the requests for meals were the in-person meetings in July and August. Also forwarded the email communication confirming. SGO will review and follow up. Jesse Mojica, FACE liaison, confirmed what the AA said and asked to be copied on future emails concerning this.
- Members were asked to send in their requests.

**Meeting Adjourned – 9:31 pm**