

# Citywide Council on Special Education

Thursday, October 20, 2022

## Calendar Meeting Minutes

### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Co-President Ellen McHugh at 6:05 pm.

### Roll Call

Francine Almash	Present
Cynthia Arbulu Vacca	Present
Sanayi 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	Excused

A quorum was present.

Interpreters introduced themselves.

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

The Council voted to assign a Timekeeper until after the presentation.

### **Presentation – Special Education Update**

John Hammer - Deputy Chief Executive Director - Special Education Office

- Officially launched 10 central SEED (Sensory Exploration, Education and Discovery) sites. It was a very exciting day and strong turnout.
- The first high school sessions (PS 37 in Staten Island and PS 4 in Brooklyn) also took place and went very well.
- Expansion of SEED is on track for end of November with an additional 35 sites.
- Beyond Access Series had a joint presentation with AHRC on the transition options for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Also had a Spanish session on bilingual special education. Working with the Cerebral Palsy Foundation for an upcoming session called the

Balancing Act: Meeting Students Where They Are While Motivating Them to Where They Can Go.

- Announced the new Director of Family and Community Empowerment Andre Mitchell. Official first day will be on Monday.
- Christina Foti attended the Council for Great City Schools Conference where she presented on the great work that the city is doing with specialized programs including ASD Nest and Horizon and had the opportunity to learn about other special education programs nationwide.

### **Presentation – Enrollment for Kids with Disabilities/IEPs**

Sarah Kleinhandler

Chief Enrollment Officer - Early Childhood Educations and Student Enrollment

Shona K. Gibson

Executive Director, District 75 Citywide Office - Division of Specialized Instruction & Student Support

Matthew Broggini - Senior Director, Middle School Admissions

Please refer to the recording ([https://1drv.ms/v/s!AtzWPqmXwkYpcPYWNf3Jau9X\\_HI?e=v8ejfg](https://1drv.ms/v/s!AtzWPqmXwkYpcPYWNf3Jau9X_HI?e=v8ejfg)) for the full presentation.

### **Approval of Minutes September 29, 2022**

Paullette Healy moved and Heather Dailey seconded to accept the September 29, 2022 minutes as written. There was a voice vote and all members voted yes.

### **Co-President's Report**

Ellen McHugh

- Attended the City Council meeting on early intervention (lasted five hours) where City Council Member Rita Joseph (Chair of Education Committee) expressed her concerns about students with special needs. I've reached out to her scheduler to schedule a meeting. It is tentatively scheduled for November 2 after 3:00 pm. Once confirmed, I will let you know.
- Also reached out to Assembly Member Michael Benedetto of the Bronx (Co-Chair of the Education Committee) and he would like to meet with the CCSE to discuss upcoming issues on the implementation of the class size bill and special education as a whole – not just D75. Once confirmed, I will let you know.
- We received only two applications for the CCSE representative on CCHS. AA will send the applications to the Council members for review and discuss the interview process.
- Anthony Aguilar of FACE reached out to us to schedule a Town Hall meeting with the Chancellor. Would like for there to create a sub-committee to discuss further.
- Transition Planning – we've briefly discussed that a transition plan should be in place for a student by age 14. The planning and transition interview process should start around the age of 12. If you're a parent who has a child approaching age 12 and have not received any transition planning, please reach out to the school.

- The Council also put out a resolution on Charter Schools, as proposed by other Councils on the issue of class size. With the demand for space in public schools by Charters, the class size for the general education population is shrinking as well as available classrooms. This means that students with special needs and D75 students will be shuffle around from school to school. WE must keep an eye on this.
- Chancellor Banks has not responded to the letter we sent him after our meeting. Hopefully, we're hear from him by our next meeting on November 10.
- I recently attended a town hall with D75 where Chancellor Banks was in attendance. Pat Jewett, a D75 Council Member read an email from a parent asking why the Chancellor referred to parents as "gaming the system." The Chancellor commented that he has had the discussion number of times and did not intend to hurt anyone's feelings.
- There has been talk about creating a Legislative Breakfast in March to discuss with our State and Federal Representative the state of education in NYC. There will be upcoming news on this.

## **Members' Reports**

### Paullette Healy

- Will be touring five schools in District 21 that are hosts for inclusion programs. Will be joined by members of the CEC 21 as well as D75 Council. Will report back at next meeting. This is just the first of many tours and the start of many conversations, we hope, with Enrollment in terms of access and accountability.
- There was also a PIST (Parents to Improve Student Transportation) meeting. I wasn't able to attend but was informed that there will be a rally on Halloween at Tweed. The rally is to highlight that parents are still waiting for buses. There's also info that the rideshare option is no longer available.
- At the PEP meeting, there was not contact extension for Uber or Driver Collective. Waiting on OPT to follow up on rideshare options because contracts have expired and have not been renewed.
- There was a District Leadership meeting in District 20 to discuss the revamping of the grading policy. Will follow and report back.
- CEC 20 is hosting town hall with Chancellor Banks on November 1 at PS 6. Hasn't been confirmed if this meeting will be hybrid.
- There will be an event on December 2, the eve of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. It's a celebration to continue amplifying that people with disabilities is an

### Heather Dailey

- Updating on the Busing Committee – It's been a challenging week for busing. Three parents communicated that they received text messages from the bus matron that there would be no bus to pick up their child this morning and going forward. Routes are being canceled because there are no drivers. Parents are actually being told this on the same day they are losing their busing. I've reached out to the Office of Pupil Transportation for help in resolving these issues.

- I along with Laretta Joseph and Mr. Lawrence from D75 will be meeting tomorrow with lawyer Laurie Barbieri to discuss a possible class action lawsuit for busing. Putting feelers out to parents to see if they would like to be identified as plaintiffs.
- The Committee is also working on streamlining forms to collect data.
- Rima Izquierda (PIST) and I will meet with John Hammer to get more info about NYCSA.
- Also reporting that the GPS did not roll out in District 26. Parents have discovered that there is an app that can be downloaded and connected to your NYCSA account. Will follow up with John Hammer to fix the NYCSA issue before a citywide rollout because it will be difficult for parents and non-public school to access GPS Busing if they don't have access to NYCSA.
- Attended the PEP meeting last night and want to shout out to the members who spoke out against the Chancellor's remarks about students. A special shout out to PEP Member Kimball, who broke ranks with the Mayoral Appointees, to express his concerns about do things the right way.

Francine Almash

- The Blue Ribbon Commission – a panel on high school graduation measures, had their first meeting last week. I'm on the sub-committee for assessment and measurement. The committee is made up of 44 people from across the State. The first meeting was informal. Attendees introduced themselves and talked about why they came to participate on the Commission and how they look forward to finding better ways to access students for graduation eligibility. The next meeting is in December. We were encouraged to go out into our communities to gather information about what people think would make for good high school graduation measures.

Cynthia Arbulu Vacca

- I'm assisting two parents whose preschoolers have not been placed in a D75 program because of changes in the IEP. Will escalate to John Hammer so that we can help these parents.

### **New Business**

- Co-President McHugh asked the members to start thinking about the annual IEP Conference and to consider having it in person because it's been two year since having it in person.

### **Member Reimbursement**

- Members were reminded to submit their reimbursements.
- AA will provide a financial report to show where we are in our budget so that we can make plans for 2023.

### **Announcements**

- Co-President McHugh asked if members would like to volunteer to start sub-committees on Enrollment, Transition. Paullette Healy volunteered to chair the Enrollment and District Planning sub-committees.

Laura Barbieri

- The Administrative Assistants are unionized and they have representation but the contract has not been finalized between the DOE and Union – DC37. A lawsuit has been started by several CECs with District 16 as the primary plaintiff. The CECs want to ensure that they have a voice in the employment relationship with the AAs meaning that CECs are responsible for hiring, evaluating, supervising and discharging AAs. They are looking to maintain a “joint” employer relationship with the DOE in regards to the AAs.

Paullette Healy moved and Cynthia Arbulu Vacca seconded to adjourn the meeting.

**Meeting Adjourned – 8:46 pm**

APPROVED