



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15

131 Livingston Street, Room 301, Brooklyn, New York 11201

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Calendar Meeting - Special Education Approved on 08/14/2018 at a Business/Calendar Meeting

Date: 07/31/2018

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: MS 88, 544 7th Avenue, Room 256

Agenda (as publicly posted):

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Welcome - Camille Casaretti, CEC15 President
3. D15 Superintendent Report - Donalda Chumney, Principal Leadership Facilitator D15
4. Special Education Services - Christina Foti, Chief Executive Director, Special Education Office, Division of Specialized Instruction and Student Support, DOE
5. IEPs: What Do They Mean and What Are Your Rights? - Miriam A. Nunberg, Education Attorney and Advocate
6. Learning and Attention Issues 101 - Understood.org
7. Public Comments
8. Adjournment

Call to Order at 6:37 p.m.

1. Roll Call - Camille Casaretti

Present:

Camille Casaretti, President

Kathy Park Price, Co-Vice President

Antonia Ferraro, Secretary

Lili Velez, Parliamentarian

Nicole Brier

Late:

Charles Star, Treasurer

Elena Romero

Yanfeng Zhang

Absent:

Scott Powell, Co-Vice President - Excused

Mark Bisard - Excused

Neal Zephyrin - Excused

Invited Guests:

Donalda Chumney, Principal Leadership Facilitator D15



Christina Foti, Chief Executive Director, Special Education Office, Division of Specialized Instruction and Student Support, DOE

Miriam A. Nunberg, Education Attorney and Advocate

Paula Heitman, Understood.org

2. Welcome - Camille Casaretti, CEC15 President

- It's great to have so many people attend a summer meeting.
- Nicole Brier, CEC15 IEP Representative, coordinated this meeting.

3. D15 Superintendent Report - Donalda Chumney, Principal Leadership Facilitator D15

- D15 Superintendent Anita Skop sends her regards.
- Ground making moment to have so many parents, representatives here thinking and talking about special education.
- Many of our schools are quite progressive providing special education needs.
- Thank you CEC15 for organizing this meeting.
- No one is more ready and excited to see a child succeed than a special educator.

4. Special Education Services - Christina Foti, Chief Executive Director, Special Education Office, Division of Specialized Instruction and Student Support, DOE

- Ms. Foti attended the CEC15 meeting to answer all questions about DOE priorities for the upcoming school year regarding Special Education in New York City.
- The Shared Path Framework guides the work of Special Education in NYC through 4 tenants:
 - Access - How to ensure that every child has access to school, curriculum and adapted education material.
 - Behavior - Students with disabilities struggle with behavior. It's our role as educators to work alongside parents to support challenging behavior.
 - Transition - Parents are most worried about what life will be like for their children with disabilities if they're not here. Ask your school about the supports in place to support your child to ensure smooth transition to college, career, or independent living.
 - Quality IEPs - IEPs are a living document of our child's progress. Parents are the primary advocates for our children, it's our job to make sure this document is connected to your child's needs.
- Chancellor Carranza is in the process of appointing a Chief Academic Officer. The Chief Academic Officer will overlook:
 - The Division of Teaching and Learning
 - The Division of Specialized Instruction and Student Support
 - Special Education Office
 - District 75
 - The Division of English Language Learners
- The new structure will ensure that every district is taking a coordinated approach to instruction. All approaches may not work for every student. We need a coordinated approach, a multi-tier approach to student support.



- Overview of some priorities of the Division of Specialized Instruction and Student Support:
 - Ensuring appropriate referrals to Special education.
 - If a child struggles to read or with his or her behavior, it does not always mean that the child has a disability.
 - Strengthening knowledge of Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) and launching lab sites.
 - Expanding specialized programs and ensuring impact.
 - Specialized programs:
 - Academic, Career, and Essential Skill Program (ACES)
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Nest and ASD Horizon
 - Bilingual Special Education (BSE)
 - For more information about these programs and how to apply, visit: www.schools.nyc.gov/special-education/school-settings/specialized-programs
 - Expanding the transition planning process and work-based learning.
 - Growing the preschool continuum.
 - DOE-wide commitment to opening more classes in Pre-K Centers and D75.
 - Improving Autism supports across the continuum
- The Transition and College Access Centers provide support for high school age students with disabilities. They help these students transition from high school to college. There is 1 center in Brooklyn, 1 in the Bronx and 1 in Staten Island.
- The center in Brooklyn is located at Boys & Girls High School, 1700 Fulton St., 1st Floor, Room G170.
- The work continues and the Office of Special Education will try to get to many schools as possible.
- If you feel that your child has a need that your school is not providing please talk to the principal.
- Special education is a service. Some of those services can be provided in your school district, however if not provided then the Office of Special Education will work with you to arrange those services.
- If you have any questions please email SpecialEducation@schools.nyc.gov and D75info@schools.nyc.gov

5. IEPs: What Do They Mean and What Are Your Rights? - Miriam A. Nunberg, Education Attorney and Advocate

- Ms. Nunberg is a civil rights attorney and a former special education teacher
- From the legal perspective, children with disabilities are entitled to the services they need/are getting.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has 13 categories of impairment. A child under any of these categories requires special education and related services.
- If a child does not qualify for an IEP (Individualized Education Program) the child could get a 504 plan if the child has substantial limitation on a major life activity. IEP ends in college, unless the student has a need then it will continue until 21 years old. The 504 plan protects students in college.
- Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) - If a child has a disability they are entitled to FAPE. Instruction must be 'specially designed' to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability through an individualized education program reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances.
- If you think your child has a disability speak to your child's teachers/principals. Schools are required to catch all kids' with disabilities.



- If you want an evaluation for your child put it in writing: “I would like my child to be evaluated in all areas of suspected disability.” DOE must evaluate all children.
- Once they evaluate and agree the child needs services, the DOE has 60 days from the time you give consent to provide services.
- If you disagree with the results of the evaluation, you can request an independent evaluation. Put your request in writing: “I am requesting an independent evaluation.” You should be able to get that independent evaluation.
- IEP Meeting: DOE should give you notice of the meeting date and who will be in the meeting. DOE should provide you with the evaluation documents prior to the meeting.
- If you have not seen the evaluation documents to properly prepare for the meeting, reschedule the meeting. Ask to reschedule in writing, do not just not show up.
- You have the right to have all documents translated to your main language and to have an interpreter present at the meeting. If there is no interpreter present, cancel the meeting, but you must put it in writing: “I canceled the meeting because there was no interpreter and would like to reschedule when there’s an interpreter available.”
- If you have someone you want to bring to the meeting you can bring the person. If bringing a professional or an attorney you should notify the school first to let them know. If you are just bringing an advocate or someone for support, there’s no need to notify the school.
- Your role as a parent is to advocate for your child and for yourself.
- IEPs present levels of performance, takes a look at evaluation results and includes academic strength and weaknesses.
- IEPs must have specific goals, must be comprehensive. Goals must need something and must address your child’s needs.
- IEPs could be reviewed and rewritten as needed. You have the right to say “I don’t agree” if there’s something on the IEP you do not agree with. If you request a service for for your child it must be listed under “Parent Concerns”.
- For more information please email Ms. Nunberg at mnunberg@gmail.com or visit studentequitysolutions.com

6. Learning and Attention Issues 101 - Paula Heitman, Understood.org

- Understood.org is a free online resource for parents for learning and attention issues.
- Major issues most kids with disabilities are dealing with are: Dyslexia, ADHD, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia and Executive Functioning Issues.
- Dyslexia - Issues with reading. It may go undiagnosed. Dyslexia can cause trouble with:
 - Basic reading skills
 - Connecting letters to sounds
 - Sounding out words
 - Recognizing sight words
- ADHD - Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Technically is not a learning disability but it affects learning. The exact cause isn’t known. Kids with ADHD are not lazy, they have a brain-based medical condition. ADHD can make it hard for kids to:
 - Sit still



- Concentrate
- Focus
- Control impulses and emotions
- Dyscalculia - Trouble with math. Students can't retain the math concept they learned before. This is sometimes called a "mathematics learning disability" or even referred to as "math dyslexia".
- Dysgraphia - Trouble with writing. It affects writing skills and written expression and can present a wide range of writing challenges. It affects kids' ability to put thoughts down on paper. Kids with dysgraphia may:
 - Have messy handwriting
 - Struggle to hold a pencil, draw or form letters.
 - Struggle to organize their thoughts and express them using proper sentence structure.
- Why we care about these learning disabilities? 1 in 5 kids (15 million aged 3-20) struggle with learning and attention issues. Nearly half of those affected have more than one challenge.
- Only 68% of kids with learning attention issues graduate with a regular diploma. Over half of students with these issues have had some involvement with the criminal justice system with 8 years of leaving high school. If a child is in a school and do not get they support they need, why would they go back?
- Misunderstanding:
 - 50% of parents attribute learning disabilities to laziness.
 - 55% of parents believe home environment is the cause of learning disabilities.
 - 80% of parents confuse learning disabilities with developmental delays and other disorders.
- Children with disabilities often struggle with self-esteem, not because they don't experience success, but because it can be inconsistent. The good days become less than the bad days.
- They may be the target of jokes or bullying because of their issues. Best example of this are reading level books, children are made fun of for reading at a lower level than their classmates.
- Be there for your children. Let them know you know that they're struggling with school but that you have their back.
- Key things to remember:
 - Struggles associated with learning and attention issues can impact self-esteem.
 - Help your child recognize their strengths.
 - Use effective praise. Have them recognize what's great, what's good so they can feel good about themselves.
 - It's okay to ask for help.
- Empowered parents give us confident kids.

To download all presentations please visit CECD15.org/special-education

7. Public Comments

- Parents asked a few questions to the presenters and shared their experiences as parents of children with disabilities with those present at the meeting.

8. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 9:05 p.m.



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- Minutes submitted by Francisca Andino, CEC15 Administrative Assistant