



CITYWIDE DISTRICT 75 COUNCIL

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**CEC District 75
Special Education**

CALENDAR MEETING MINUTES: February 16, 2011

The Calendar Meeting of the Citywide District 75 Council was held on Wednesday, February 16, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. at P12X@Lewis & Clark School, 2555 Tratman Avenue, Bronx, NY.

1. Roll Call

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| ➤ Able Alagbe , 2 nd VP; Queens Representative | Absent |
| ➤ Charlene Carroll-Hall , 1 st VP; Queens Representative | Excused |
| ➤ Gloria Gonsalves , Council Member; Manhattan Representative | Present |
| ➤ Diana Marenfeld , Council Member; Brooklyn Representative | Present |
| ➤ Tom Ryan, Jr. , President; Queens Representative | Present |
| ➤ Joe Williams , Public Advocate Appointee; Queens Representative | Present |
| ➤ Dixon Destuch , Public Advocate Appointee; Manhattan Representative | Present |
| ➤ Gloria Smith , Council Member; Brooklyn Representative | Present |
| ➤ Berangere Pierre-Louis , Council Member; Brooklyn Representative | Present |

2. Secretary's Report: Approval of Meeting Minutes: December & January

A motion to accept the December 15, 2010 and January 19, 2011 Calendar Meeting Minutes was made by Diana Marenfeld Joe Williams motion to accept the minutes, Gloria Smith second and all were in favor.

3. Report of the President

I want to thank Deputy Chancellor Laura Rodriguez for agreeing to speak tonight at the Calendar Meeting here at P12X@Lewis and Clark School.

I also want to thank superintendent of District 75, Gary Hetch and his staff for attending as well.

A special thank you; to the new Principal of P12X Dr. Jones, for letting the council hold their monthly meeting here tonight.

There are proposed changes to the leadership structure of the Citywide District 75 council. The council has proposed that their will be two Co-Presidents instead of one representing the CEC for District 75. The changes will reflect in the revised Bylaws as well as a resolution and voted on the next Calendar Meeting. Ms. Charlene Carroll-Hall as the First Vice President of the council has agreed to fill the Co-President Vacancy within CD75C. As per our current bylaws and order of succession will be filled by nomination process and voted on by the council. The council will keep everyone informed of the changes.

The council's busing committee is in the process of finalizing a survey for district 75 parents to review and respond too. The survey will be distributed to the schools by our administrative assistant to the parent coordinators and principals for distribution to the parents. We will also

post the survey on the website survey monkey. We urge all parents to participate, fill out and return the survey to us via the email, fax, and postal mail or via your child's parent coordinator at his/her school.

We have been informed that there are more space utilization changes being set forth. The recent one presented to the council is the Explorer Charter School. Explorer Charter School has a lease that is running out and is looking to re-locate at PS141 in Brooklyn. PS141 currently houses a D75 middle school, we will as Superintendent Hecht to expand on the particulars regarding the situation and how it affects the district 75 school located within the building.

There is also a significant space change that is being proposed here in the Bronx. After my conversation with Gary Hecht this seems like good news for district 75 and will let Gary report on the good news during his report.

I would like to urge all parents of district 75 to contact the council in the event regarding any space utilizations changes adversely affects their children and school. We will continue to monitor these changes and keep you informed as well.

The schools will be closed next week for the mid-winter recess, starting Monday February 21 thought February 25th and school will resume on Monday, February 28th.

This concludes the Presidents Report for February.

4. Report of the Superintendent

Gary reported to the council and attendees that it's been a good year as far as space goes for District 75. We have normally heard that their taken space away from District 75, but the truth is that this past year we have had so much space. The opportunity to work closely with Portfolio has allowed the office of Portfolio to understand the needs of district and its population that we served.

There is going to be an Education Impact Statement that will be posted and its going to reference one of our school in the Bronx; P168X on Marian Avenue. For many years we have been indicating that P168X really needs more space and change because it is in the basement of a church. The conditions are lousy for the students who are autistic and the school services students who are k though 5. The conditions are not great for the staff as well.

Under the leadership of Deputy Chancellor Laura Rodriguez for students of Disabilities and ELL she has supported our request to relocate the program. The Education Impact Statement that will be coming out within the next two weeks will indicate that we will be given the opportunity to move into what is called AMPARK it is a DOE building and a charter school will be moving out and we will be moving in. So I thank Laura Rodriguez for pushing the move for our students to grow and accelerate.

Some of the Principals have indicated to me that they want to consolidate some of their programs because they have many sites. For those who don't know, we have a main building and offsite because of the student population we need to integrate our students into many programs. Meaning a principal is responsible for one main building plus 4 to 5 offsite in co-located buildings. Some of our principals have indicted that it is a lot to move around for services for student, provided professional development for staff, as well as for students and sometimes you have only have two classes for a certain population; it doesn't allow for greater integration for those students.

In Brooklyn one of our programs P141, we are talking about moving some of the students into a program where there will be a more particular population that will be better served. That will be an Educational Impact Statement that has not come out but I just wanted to share it with you.

The principal has indicated that based on speaking with the SLT it will be a better move for the entire organization. This year we have not lost any space I want to make that clear, part of that is being part of the special education reform is that we are inline with all DOE policy and procedures. Laura Rodriguez who you will be meeting shortly, that D75 is not different from anyone else we may serve students that have disabilities and were on the same playing field as anyone else.

Dist 75 students will be participating again in American Idol at Frank Sinatra H.S. and the students follow the same format as the American Idol television focusing on talent and curriculum.

Gary introduce a new member to his cabinet, Ms. Barbra Joseph who was elected the Deputy Superintendent for District 75 and I am very please to have her in that position and work closely with her.

Ms. Joseph introduced herself to the council and attendees, provided her background experiences and informed the council that she looks forward to working with them.

5. Laura Rodriguez, Deputy Chancellor Division of Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners, NYC Department of Education

Ms. Rodriguez introduced herself to the council and attendees, she proceeded to inform them that last year in the month of May we started a started a position to celebrate inclusion through creativity. In partnership with P.I.E.: Parents for Inclusive Education we at the DOE conduct citywide contest to involved as many students as possible. One of the questions the students had to answer is "How does inclusive education make my school great"? Last year many students within district 75 programs participated in the event and through poetry, dance, song, art and music in many different ways they expressed as to why inclusion is great within their school. It was a tremendously proud moment for the children, educators and families during the event.

Ms. Rodriguez, mentioned that she has been working within the DOE for 30 years plus and that the children are really what drives us to education. Her children went through the public education system and she is a product of the public school system in the Bronx.

Ms. Rodriguez meetings with educators and parents the question regarding Special Education Reforms the question remains what is it about? We at the DOE are putting an emphasis on the teaching learning process. What takes place everyday with students with disabilities in the classrooms with their teachers in the schools they attend? How do we, the adults and the educators organize ourselves so that we more efficiently and expertly by providing support and educational access to children? The reform is about putting the emphasis back on each individual student.

The federal legislation (IDEA) is about individualism the education. In NYC several schools are part of this first year of reform and it basically means we want to help schools build a capacity to educate many more students with disabilities than they currently do. Unfortunately, some schools were able to tell parents we don't have that program or I don't have that service. Parents were redirected to go to the school down the block and place their child into another school.

Our own practices at central head quarters would allow that in the projection of the placement process; when in fact there were many ways that we can educate the overwhelming majority of students. We know that sometimes a student will need extra support of specialization that does

not exist in the community school. This is why the many wonderful programs that exist in district 75 became available to children with disabilities and their families.

In many ways the reform is about making sure we have many more options and choices for a wider range of diverse group of students. The first reason the DOE is involved in the educational reform is because we were graduating about 27% of students with disabilities and that is inexcusable. That is a statistic that we can not defend and we need to close the achievement gap to ensure that children with disabilities graduate from high school and have options to go to college, gainful employment, independent living depending on a range of issues that each student presents. Knowing in 12 or 13 years through an educational process and support; children can achieve much more each and every years.

Having district 75 part of our division really allows us to learn a lot from the expertise over the years that the educators and community in district 75 has built. At the same time, it allows us to help them in the areas were they need to improve. One of the areas we are looking at is whether a child who is in a standardize program should take the all of the standardized test or not. We're reaching towards standards the work we're doing now is called the "common core standards". By 2014 we want to get the students to excel in Math and ELA with more depth and conceptually understanding along with more ability. The students in all our programs including district 75 are part of that process and ultimately the goal is to have a better secondary post options. The first thing we think about is whether the student is five years old (with or without an IEP) how dose the educator get this child to finish school successful and get to college. What are the many option for the individual child who's IEP who differs from the other child.

The IEP which unfortunately in many schools within NYC schools is not used appropriately or the goals are meaningless. In the reform there is a big emphasis in building around on how do you write a meaningful goals in an IEP that connects with the teacher in the classroom who then will want to use the IEP as a tool to help the student and as a tool to help the colleagues to improve their practice and to figure out how to better educate the student.

Ms. Rodriguez mentioned SESIS as the new electronic version of the IEP. In July there is also the newly revised state mandated IEP. The DOE will be using SESIS via electronic the IEP allowing teachers easier and quicker access to review the students IEP. There has been two day training for the leadership team and IEP Team regarding the IEP thought the city.

The second goal of the reform is to build capacity, Ms. Rodriguez and the leadership team meets and figure out what is best for the student. In the reform they are introducing this notion of universal design, that accessibility is used by all people. Things that were designed for people with disabilities have helped population at large. That concept in education promotes inclusion and promotes the fact that children without disabilities when in classrooms, communities and school settings with students with disabilities that all children benefit.