

Minutes of the Community Education Council for District 1

Calendar Meeting, October 19, 2016

The Calendar meeting of the Community Education Council for District 1 was called to order by Naomi Peña on October 19, 2016 at 6:35 p.m. at P. S. 20.

Present at the meeting were Marco Battistella, Cynthia Cartagena, Aline Gnali, Luke Henry, Naomi Peña, David Post, Moses Seuram, Michael Stutman, and Stephanie Thompson. Jennie White was absent and her absence was excused due to illness.

Minutes of the September 28 meeting were read and approved.

Superintendent Daniella Phillips then gave her report. She first addressed certain personnel changes at PS MS 34, and the C-30 review that is currently under way at PS 20 and MS 378. Both of these reviews have progressed to Level 2. Additionally Mr. Dexter Hannibal has been selected as the new Family Support Coordinator having been selected out of more than 1300 applications. The middle school fair had approximately 800 people in attendance and the pre-K/kindergarten fair is scheduled for December 1 at PS 134. In other news, Dennis Gault has been selected as the local representative for the UFT. The superintendent also participated in a discussion both at the beginning and during the public comment portion of the meeting with respect to the personnel transitions at PS MS 34 with a focus on concerns that the new interim acting principal was not introduced until the school year was well underway.

We then heard a presentation from Leonie Haimson from Class Size Matters concerning her view and the view of her organization on the Contracts for Excellence (C4E) proposal. She stated that:

- This year's proposed C4E plan again fails to make any commitments to reduce class size and allows schools to use C4E funds to minimize further class size increases
- Like last year, DOE says they will "*focus class size reduction planning efforts*" on the struggling schools in the "Renewal Program" though no specific class size targets or goals are mentioned
- Despite this promise, 38% of Renewal schools last year failed to reduce class size; 60% had classes as large as 30 or more; only 6 schools out of 94 capped class size at original C4E levels.
- Instead of lowering class size, DOE is now spending more than \$12.7 M on 114 administrators, supervisors & "coaches" at Renewal schools

Ms. Haimson also addressed the DOE's use of C4E funds for purposes not related to class size reduction; class size increases in CSD1; the DOE's claim that the original state-approved class size reduction plan has expired; the DOE's refusal to allocate funds specifically towards class size reduction in its targeted or citywide C4E allocations; and the mayor's claim that there is too little funding and space to address class size concerns.

Thereafter Mirna Fermin, who serves as the budget liaison for all schools in District 1, presented the Department of Education proposed plan for fiscal year 2017 Contracts for Excellence. A lively discussion followed between members of the Council, the representative from the Department of Education and the representative from Class Size Matters.

A report on the status of the Socioeconomic Integration Pilot Program grant was received and the unanimous disappointment and frustration was voiced by the Council as it adopted and endorsed by motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the terms of a letter dated October 14, 2016 sent to Mayor de Blasio by the District 1 Presidents Council.

Thereafter upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried a resolution calling on Gov. Cuomo and the New York State legislators to implement a two year full phase in of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity Monies in New York City. The terms of the resolution are appended to these minutes

Thereafter on motion duly made seconded and unanimously carried the Council passed a resolution calling on the DOE to implement The Socioeconomic Integration Pilot Program Grant. The terms of the resolution are appended to these minutes.

The Council finally heard a presentation from Vaylateena Jones from the Lower East Side Power Partnership with respect to reports presented by the Department of Youth and Community Development and The Department of Education dated March 18, 2016 and March 16, 2016 respectively. Both of these reports concern the fiscal 2017 preliminary budget and the fiscal 2016 preliminary Mayor's Management Report. Both of these reports highlight certain expenditures that seem to be targeted for increased literacy projects throughout the city. Ms. Jones provided the Council with information and research results which reveal that at least seven elementary schools in District 1 have less than 35% of their students able to achieve a score of three or four in the English Language Arts. The schools have student populations that are predominantly Black and Latino. Credible research with respect to the futures of children who cannot read proficiently by the end of second and third grades concludes that these children are at significant risk to leave school without a diploma, to be unable to graduate from high school, and are likely to be incarcerated. Ms. Jones urged the Council to do whatever it can to assist in the expeditious distribution of these literacy funds and, if there are priorities for recipients, to advocate that District 1 be among the first to receive the funds as we have the greatest population in the greatest jeopardy.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Stutman

Resolution: Calling on Governor Cuomo and New York State Legislators for a 2 Year full phase in of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity Monies in New York City and across the state ahead of the 10th Year Anniversary of final court ruling.

Whereas, in 2006 the NYS Court of Appeals found that in fact NYS was violating students' constitutional rights to a "sound, basic education" through its final court order;

Whereas, the final court order lead to the 2007 statewide settlement of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity case by committing to provide \$5.5 billion in basic classroom operating aid, also known as Foundation Aid.

Whereas, October 10th, 2016 marks the 10 year Anniversary of this crucial court case ruling in favor of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity and a decade later, schools across the state are still owed \$3.8 billion of which NYC schools are owed \$1.6 Billion;

Whereas, students, particularly Black and Latino students and students living in poverty have been disproportionately affected by the state's indifference to providing "a sound, basic education" for all and reluctance to comply with CFE ruling;

Whereas, according to a new report by the Alliance for Quality education "CFE Derailed: The State of our Schools in the Wake of the 2016 State Budget and a Decade after the campaign for fiscal Equity", 30 out of 33 school districts where the overwhelming student population is Black and Latino, have not received the money owed.

Whereas, schools across the city have had classroom cuts, have been forced to lay off staff and have seen increased class sizes, while being forced to cut arts and music programs and struggle to provide afterschool programs and advanced placement courses;

Whereas, there is not an achievement gap as much as there is an opportunity gap;

Whereas, we affirm that New York State has a constitutional responsibility to provide a "Sound, basic education" for all, regardless of race or zip code and must address the opportunity gap;

Be it resolved: that Community Education Councils in New York City call on Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislators for a full two year phase-in of Campaign for Fiscal Equity Monies distributed via the Foundation Aid Formula, to begin to address the opportunity gap that has systemically impacted our schools ability to provide a sound basic education for all children in the city of New York.

RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE DOE TO IMPLEMENT THE SOCIOECONOMIC INTEGRATION PILOT PROGRAM GRANT

Whereas, District 1 was awarded a Socioeconomic Integration Pilot Program Grant in 2015, (the “SIPP Grant”), for a Socio-Economic Status (“SES”) Pilot Program whose guiding principles were to ensure the proposed program: “1) complies with the RFP’s requirements for “a choice-based admissions policy that will promote socioeconomic diversity in the [target] school’s entry-grade through consideration of at-risk factors for each applicant”; 2) addresses the RFP’s concern “that increased socioeconomic integration in the target school does not result in the increased socioeconomic isolation in other schools within the district”; 3) will be designed in accordance with the Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools that was jointly issued by the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights on December 2, 2011; and 4) will promote socioeconomic diversity and avoid racial isolation in a way that is equitable and fair to all students and practicable to implement”;

Whereas, support for the SIPP Grant was informed by years of outreach to and participation from District 1 school community members on the issues of school equity and student assignment;

Whereas, through no fault of D1 school community members, the planning and implementation of this SIPP Grant has been plagued by delays, empty promises, and a lack of resources;

Whereas, in March 2016 and notwithstanding the numerous delays, empty promises, and lack of resources, a planning workgroup of the SIPP grant delivered recommendations, consistent with the guiding principles of the grant, for a choice-based, SES-conscious student assignment plan for schools district-wide that would allow for an equal distribution (within +/- 5% of the district average) of students identified as at-risk, utilizing a multifaceted definition of Socio-Economic Status that includes factors such as household income, parental educational attainment, English Language Learner status, Special Education status, and temporary housing status;

Whereas, in the seven months since those recommendations were delivered the DOE has yet to make a commitment to implement these recommendations;

Whereas, only in September did senior officials at the DOE state that implementation for the 2017-2018 admission cycle of a choice-based admissions policy that will promote socioeconomic diversity in District 1 school’s Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten entry-grades is unlikely;

Whereas, separately from the SIPP grant, on November 20, 2015, Chancellor Farina announced admissions pilots designed to promote diversity, with the participation of 2 D1 schools, and, in May 2016, Chancellor Farina announced the expansion of this “Diversity in Admissions” pilot, allowing principals from “every public school in the city” to apply for changes to admissions plans that will promote school integration by setting enrollment targets for incoming students arriving in 2017, and, now, 3 other D1 schools have announced their intention to participate;

Whereas, the online form for submitting “Diversity in Admissions” plans suggest 11 categories of students for enrollment targets, through which schools would give priority to selected categories for a certain percentage of seats within the context of existing admissions priorities;

Whereas, the DOE promised principals and the public at large that a “Diversity in Admissions” plan submitted anytime up to three weeks before the start of the Kindergarten enrollment period would be considered, and in District 1 these plans are rapidly being approved, with 2 existing already and 3 more having been applied for;

Whereas, the galling double-standard of allowing these plans to be implemented on just three weeks-notice, while consigning the integration recommendations of the Federally-funded, community-supported, and widely beneficial SIPP Grant to the sideline for over 7 months now, has caused grave concerns, not the least of which are on behalf of those schools potentially catastrophically affected by a single-school-directed “Diversity in Admissions” plan and which ask why the SIPP grant is being held to a different standard and timeline than the DOE’s Diversity in Admission plans;

Whereas, in the absence of implementation by the DOE of the choice-based, SES-conscious student assignment plan contemplated by the SIPP Grant and planned by the community, every District 1 elementary school ought to at least be allowed to submit a “Diversity in Admissions” plan that would prioritize a percentage of seats within +/- 5% of the district averages for available categories of at-risk and segregated students;

THEREFORE, be it Resolved, that CEC 1 recommends that every elementary school in this district apply for a “Diversity in Admissions” plan, selecting from available categories of at-risk and segregated students in District schools such that: i) Students who qualify for FRPL would have priority for a percentage of seats within +/- 5% of the district average; ii) Students who are ELLs would have priority for a percentage of seats within +/- 5% of the district average; iii) Students with an English Language Learner status would have priority for a percentage of seats within +/- 5% of the district average; and iv) Students with a Special Education status would have priority for a percentage of seats within +/- 5% of the district average;

And, **THEREFORE**, be it further Resolved, any such “Diversity in Admissions” plans, because they lack the research-based rigor of the choice-based, SES-conscious student assignment plan contemplated by the SIPP Grant and lack additional essential elements, including scalability and transparency, a positive effect on current disparate impacts, providing equal-access to information, alleviating overcrowding and eliminating under-enrollment, and adequate community support, should be made secondary to that such time as the DOE implements a choice-based admissions policy that will promote socioeconomic diversity in District 1 school’s Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten entry-grades.