

End of Year Report
Citywide District 75 Council
June 15, 2011

This report provides a summary of the Citywide District 75 Council for activities pertaining to July 2010 - May 2011 council meetings.

Member Transitions

This past year saw the transition of the following individuals:

- John Englert
- Charles Henderson
- Ellen McHugh
- Jessica Santos
- Tywana B. Sharper

Attendance

The average council present attendance was 72%.

TOPIC SUMMARIES

The following list details out the topics that were covered extensively by the Citywide District 75 Council for the 2010-2011 school year:

Co-locations

Co-locations continue to be an issue that the Council frequently visits. Earlier this year there were concerns raised at several council meetings on the process of co-locations, parental voice, and the possible displacement of students in D75 program. The Council has held several meetings to discuss co-locations throughout the five boroughs. With regard to co-locations, the Council continues to voice its concern with shared space (gym, lunchroom, library, etc.). Through extensive collaboration with stock holders such as the public advocate's office, and the council has sought to more fully understand the impact of co-locations and ensure that the voices of D75 families are heard.

Several schools, public and charter, are at the center of the co-location issue. The Council has witnessed issues arise when classroom space is taken away from D75 schools and common spaces, such as the gym and cafeteria are not appropriately shared. Schools facing this issue include, but are not limited to:

- Girls Prep Charter School (D75 school – P94M)
- Explore Charter School (D75 school – PS 141)
- Community Roots Charter School (D75 school – PS 369K @P67K)

While co-locations continue to be at the heart of the education dialogue in New York City, the Council will be sure to express their opinion and guarantee that the voices of D75 families are

included in discussions of co-locations. The Council has continuously encouraged parents to be vigilant about co-locations and to participate in the process of school closures.

Busing Issues

Several conversations have taken place with Matthew Berlin, Executive Director of OPT. He and representatives from his office have been extremely open to parent participation and feedback regarding OPT. The Council has observed the following issues and concerns with OPT:

- Buses not picking up students
- Travel time on the bus
- Buses not adhering to scheduled times (late or early)
- Mandated IEP requirements not being recognized by OPT
- Lack of communication between the schools, OPT and the parents
- Lack of accountability with OPT
- Adequate air conditioning on buses

For the first year, Council created a busing survey to capture the concerns most pressing for the parents of D75 students. The results of the busing survey, along with a graphic presentation, will be made public at the September 2011 calendar meeting.

Special Education Reform

Laura Rodriguez, Gary Hecht and Donna Dimino have visited several council meetings to explain the special education reform recommended by the Garth Harries' report to Joel Klein. A few keys to this reform include:

- Special education database and tracking reform (SEIS)
- Putting the emphasis on the teaching and learning process
- Building capacity within school leadership teams
- Providing more inclusive education within the child's zoned school
- D75 school teams delivering S.T.O.P. and other professional development prior to referrals

Chancellor Changes

Within one school year the NYCDOE has gone through three different school chancellors. Effective January 1st, Chancellor Klein resigned and Cathie Black worked for the school system for several months. In mid-spring, Chancellor Black resigned and Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott was appointed chancellor. The Council will continue to monitor the transition of the

Persistently Dangerous

During the 2009-2010 school year both 231K and 12K were on the Persistently Dangerous list. These schools successfully appealed this status in the spring of 2010. Despite their successful appeal the State Education Department changed its rules regarding Persistently Dangerous school status; all schools on the list in 2009-2010 were going to remain on the list in 2010-2011. This year, as a result of the systems and structures put in place at 231K and 12K both schools demonstrated a marked decrease in dangerous incidents in school and on the school buses. The two schools are appealing the PD status and expect to be removed from the Persistently Dangerous list this summer.

Budget Cuts

The Council has been informed that huge budget cuts are up for discussion this year. Superintendent Hecht foresees a 3% cut to D75's budget, however it is not expected that these cuts will trickle down to the schools. The Council will monitor this situation.

Council Development

The Council has hosted several individuals to better equip parents on special education matters. These individuals include:

- Laura Rodriguez – Updating parents on the special education updates
- Gary Hecht – Updating parents on D75 happenings and programs implemented by the District 75 office. Along with the Annual EPIC Fair held in May.
- Thomas F. Ryan, Jr. – Co-President of the Citywide District 75 Council, during the EPIC Fair; Keynote Speaker; presented the councils accomplishments throughout the year.
- Carmen Alvarez – Discussed raising the “Raising the Bar” campaign and the U.F.T.’s work within special education and parent advocacy
- Lori Podvesker – Updating parents on how Resources for Children with Special Needs can help parents
- Joseph Williams- Public Advocate Appointee & Treasura of Citywide District 75 Council and Vice President of the District 75 President’s Council brought together the entire District 75 family as a team to work collaboratively on various issues pertaining to District 75
- Diana Marenfeld- Busing Chairperson and Joseph Williams, Busing Committee Member, for implementing the Busing Survey and the Parent Busing pamphlet with Office of Pupil Transportation. A special thank you to Dixon Deutsch, Gloria Smith and Jackie Pierre –Louis for helping tally the results.
- Autism Speaks Walk – Several council members participated in the Autism Speaks Walk. Special thanks go to: Jackie (Berrangere) Pierre-Louis for organizing the walk for the council, Gloria Smith, Joseph Williams, Charlene Carroll-Hall, Diana Marenfeld and Dixon Deutsch for participation in the walk.

Other

New York City Department of Education Proposed Five Year Capital Plan Amendment for the Fiscal Year 2010-14; December 1, 2010- The council received a list of concerns regarding repairs within the D75 sites (elevator, air conditioning units repairs, etc). This information was passed along to the District 75 Office as well as the NYC DOE School Construction Authority

Resolutions Discussed

- Resolution 11 – Vacate Council Member Seat – (Tywana B. Shaper) - Approved
- Resolution 12 – Citywide District 75 Council 2010-2011 Fiscal Budget – Approved
- Resolution 13 – Filling a Vacancy (Gloria Smith) – Approved
- Resolution 14 - Citywide District 75 Council Filling a Vacancy (Jackie (Berrangere) Pierre-Louis) - Approved
- Resolution 15 - Citywide District 75 Council Filling a Vacancy (Jeffery T. Stimpson) - Approved
- Resolution 17 – Shared space at PS369K@P67K (Protection of further expansion and shared space demands from Community Roots Charter school) - Approved
- Resolution 18 – Maintaining Current Teacher Staff (District 75 be protected from any further budget cuts resulting from teacher layoffs) – Approved
- Resolution 19 – Citywide District 75 Council 2010-2011 Fiscal Budget - Approved
- Resolution 20 – Revision of New York State Law to require Charter Schools Pay Fair Market Value Rent to the Department of Education for Utilization of Public Schools Facilities – Approved