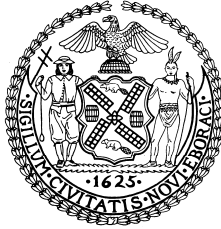


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The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8
Youth & Education Committee Meeting
Hunter College, 3rd Floor Cafeteria, SW Corner of Lexington and 68th Street
Monday, June 10, 2013 at 7:00 PM

Community Board Members (Present): Lori Bores, Sophia James, Hattie Quarnstrom, Judy Schneider, Barry Schneider,

Community Board Members (Excused):, Sarah Chu, Jim Clynes, Ed Hartzog, Lorraine Johnson, Debbie Teitelbaum

Community Board Public Members Present: Michael Hoffman

A. Introductions were made by everyone present.

B. Featuring Principal Beckman of PS/IS 217, 645 Main Street, Roosevelt Island with PTA Representative and Joined by Cathy Dove of Cornell Tech on Discussion of Joint Program

- Principal Beckman stated that the school consisted of 1-Pre-K, 4-Kindergarten sections, 2-Gifted and Talented sections (currently to the 3rd grade). There is an Assistant Principal, Parent Coordinator, Coach and a full time Guidance Counselor, although the budget only allows for part time. The Guidance Counselor works with the students for middle school choice and the students ready for high school choice. As it turns out the school functions mostly as a zoned school.
 - The school is working on implementing the common core standards, which are far more rigorous, and keeping their enrichment programs going. The school has partners to implement: a dance program; opera; yoga. By working with residency partners from the Island, the Main Street Theatre Group, there is a stronger bond/connection with the Island. When the budget was cut several years ago, the leadership had to reach out to the PTA in order to keep the enrichment programs going. In addition to the Island residents, a former resident donated a program in conjunction with the Salvatori Center last year, which stresses science, technology and math thinking. The project was on transportation on and off the Island. This was connected to what they were learning in the classroom and plays out with Cornell's move to the island. The Principal thought this enrichment program for the Middle School was so important that it was continued this year for 8 weeks and they are studying the building of bridges. Next year it will be expanded to 23 weeks and they will study skyscrapers.
 - 4 of their students have been selected to show their work at an exhibit at the Museum of Natural History this year, through the urban advantage program.
 - Natalia Starkova, PTA Treasurer, spoke about how financially supportive the PTA was of the enrichment programs offered in the school as well as other items that are needed to make the school function.
- Principal Beckman spoke about how they will partner with Cornell Tech starting this summer, what their needs are and how they can help build programs with the school—such as mentoring with teachers and students. They will be looking at how Cornell's expertise can be added to their school. This summer the first program will be Girls Who Code. This is really an engineering program that will open doors to many fields in their future and is being done around the world.
- Cathy Dove of Cornell Tech spoke more about this program. The program this year was open to 4 schools by application and will have about 25 girls, including 8 incoming 7th Graders from IS 217. The session will be 8 weeks and will teach everything from coding to robotics. The idea is to get the students excited about tech. Industry leaders will be brought in to speak and field trips will be taken—one will be to Cornell's campus in Chelsea. The program will be held on the Island at Roosevelt Landing.

- In addition, Cornell's wonderful staff in Ithaca will work to see how they can integrate with PS/IS 217. It is important for Cornell to collaborate with the school's teachers and students. Cornell will be looking for a full time coordinator, hopefully with an educational background from NY, to work with the school. They hope to have this person in place by September. Allowing their program to be one of "Adopting a School", Principal Beckman said the collaboration with Cornell will hopefully make their middle school a "niche" school that will attract middle school choice students to the island.
- PS/IS 217 and Cornell Tech will be meeting regularly to work out the details. They will come back in November and tell us more about their collaboration.

C. Kevin Douglas of United Neighborhood Houses to discuss Changes to the GED® and a proposed resolution

- New York City and State will be changing the high school equivalency exam in 2014. The GED® test will be replaced by the TASC test which will be a more rigorous exam than the current test.
- The GED® was originally created for returning war veterans in the 1940's.
- The State issued an RFP for a new exam which was awarded to McGraw Hill, who is creating this TASC test, which will be more in line the with the Common Core Standards.
- There is a worry that the State and City will not put in enough money for preparation to ensure a high pass rate of test takers.
- Primary takers of high school equivalency tests are immigrants and youth who have difficulty completing traditional education routes.
- The United Neighborhood Houses are calling for the State and the City to make more investments in community based adult literacy programs including ESOL programs in order to increase the pass rate.
- There are currently government and community based organizations offering GED® prep and ESOL classes for free, but the United Neighborhood Houses believes that this will not meet the demand that will occur once the new TASC test is put in place.

The committee passed the following resolution that will be taken up at the Borough Board on June 20th:

WHEREAS, the GED® exam is being phased out in New York as the primary pathway to a high school equivalency (HSE) diploma. Starting in January 2014, New York will use a new HSE exam that will phase in higher standards and computer-based testing; and programs and students need support to prepare for this major transition.

WHEREAS, New York City's current FY2014 budget plan includes no city funds for DYCD's community-based adult literacy services, which risks closing classroom doors to nearly 7,000 New Yorkers who want to earn a high school equivalency diploma and improve their literacy skills and employment prospects.

WHEREAS, New Yorkers who have passed some but not all sections of the GED® exam must finish the exam in 2013, or they will lose their earlier scores and have to start over with the new test in 2014.

WHEREAS, the Fund for Public Advocacy, with a coalition of partners, has launched the GED® Campaign to Finish to reach and engage 3,000 young adults who have begun the GED® preparation and testing process and support successful 2013 GED® completion for at least 2,000 individuals.

WHEREAS, adult literacy programs offer a high return on investment: for less than \$1,000 per student, adult learners become more prepared for the workforce, parents can better help children in school, young adults get back on track to educational and career advancement, and immigrants gain English language skills; and every high school credential earned generates \$324,000 in net benefits for the city.

WHEREAS, the need for adult literacy services in New York City is tremendous, with 1.2 million adults without a high school credential; 1.8 million adults lacking English proficiency; and 170,000 young adults ages 16 to 24 who are neither in school or working. The new federal policy of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is expected to further increase demand for adult literacy as an estimated 16,000 applicants in New York City strive to meet the educational criteria;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan supports adult literacy education in New York City; and calls on Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council to reach a FY2014 budget agreement that restores \$5.2 million for DYCD's Adult Literacy programs, \$1.5 million for the City Council's Adult Literacy Initiative, \$4.0 million for the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative, and funds Speaker Quinn's Adult Education DACA Initiative to expand adult education program seats.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan supports the 2013 GED® Campaign to Finish and calls on City agencies and partners to connect eligible New Yorkers to GED® preparation programs and testing to maximize the number of GED® passers before the changes in 2014.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan urges the State & City to subsidize all pathways/options to a High School Equivalency Diploma that may not yet be identified.

The vote was: 5-0-0 (Bores, James, Quarnstrom, B. Schneider, J. Schneider)

Public Member: 1-0-0 (Hoffman)

- D. Middle School Update on Hearings and use of PS 158 vacant space, to open in September, 2014 with a 6th Grade class**
- The DOE held a hearing on June 4th and a majority of parents spoke for a screened school. However, the parents were unanimous in their thinking that this plan should be sent back to the DOE for reconsideration. They did not want the school split between half screened and half limited unscreened. They did not think this would work well for the principal. They were united that they did not want the acceptance criteria to be based solely on test scores. The parents who spoke on behalf of a screened school did not articulate the type of school it should be.
 - The Electeds met with the DOE last Friday and Christina Parisi, from Congress Woman Maloney's office, reported that is seemed the principal that would be selected would have the greatest say about the emphasis of the school. There was no clarification of the screening process.
 - Interestingly, Principal Beckman said they have a screened/unscreened middle school—but it has never been implemented.
 - The Panel of Education Policy will hold their hearing and vote on the proposed EIS on June 19 at 6 pm. The **meeting location has been changed to:** Prospect Heights Campus, 883 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11225. If you cannot attend the hearing, your comments maybe emailed to: D02Proposals@schools.nyc.gov.
- E. Old/New Business**
- Update on Wait Lists for Students for September 2013
As of this meeting, no school has reported any wait list. PS 290 collapsed one of their 5th Grade classes and created a new Kindergarten class for this year to accommodate the incoming K students that had been wait listed..
- F. Future Meeting Dates:**
- No July and August Meeting
 - September 9: Invite Youth Provider
 - November 18: Invite PS/IS 217 and Cornell Tech to return to continue the dialog and discuss future plans

Hattie Quarnstrom and Judith Schneider
Co-Chair, Youth and Education Committee