

CB12M-Youth and Education Committee

Meeting Minutes Monday January 12, 2015 Meeting #1

Location: 530 West 166th Street, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10032

Committee Members Present: Fe Florimón, Chair; Maria Luna; Alyce Smith
Committee Members Absent: Lorena Jimenez-Castro; Ayisha Oglivie;
Committee Members Excused: Manny De Los Santos
Guests: Anthony Vargas, student leader, and students group from Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning School (WHEELS)
Board Member(s): George Fernandez, Chairman
Community Member(s): Al Kurland, Police Athletic League ; Meredith Marin, LMSW from CHALK Program at Presbyterian Hospital; Joel Yoffie; Jose Payero; Phil Zablocki, Community Activist;

The Chair Fe Florimón opened the meeting at 7:15 p.m.
Members of the Committee and attendees were introduced by the Chair.

❖ **Discussion was conducted as indicated below:**

The Minutes of the previous meeting December 8, 2014 still pending for approval on the next meeting

- ✓ Anthony Vargas, students' leader and his classmates from the Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning School (WHEELS) came to the meeting to discuss about their school project and to observe how the meeting is conducted. The students' project consists on a research study on the topic of "School to Prison Pipeline." The students discussed their views about the relationship between young people, the school system and police officers.
- ✓ According to the students group, the relationship between young people, the school system and police officers is not the best. They believe there is a lack of communication between them, which has become a serious concern; especially, the way in which the school system and the many police officers treat students. The group also believes that young people are too often treated like criminals and unnecessarily suspended from school for no reasons. In many occasions, students have been arrested just for writing on a desk or even for having a bad day. An example was highlighted about a 6 years old student who was arrested for having a tantrum in the classroom; so instead of finding out what was causing the child's misbehavior, the teacher decided to have the child arrested. A lot of teachers do not make the effort to learn what is happening in the lives of the students, but rather may be prompted to misjudge and labeled the student. Students also discussed the excess of force used by many of the

police officers as a common problem in the society, which too often involves people of color. The relationship between young people and authority needs to be improved.

✓ Another member in the audience found it discouraging and perhaps intimidating that everyday police vehicles are parked in front of schools just waiting for arrest to happen. Students also questioned the conduct of the school safety authority in school's building. They understand and respect the fact that safety authority has the right to stop and question students when necessary. However, the procedure this authority use it should be conducted with respect without using excessive force. This is not an appropriate measure to treat students and for that reason is unacceptable. When it comes to the question of legal judgment against young people or students, the justice department should be the single authority handling the matter and not the police.

✓ It was also stated that the majority of problems faced by students come from a dysfunctional school system that too often has misjudged, labeled and discouraged young people, especially people of colors who are more prompt to become victim of the same system. The combinations of school dysfunctional systems, the excess of police force and the lack of good relationship with the students, seem to promote a feeding pattern that increases the number in schools to prison pipeline. In their final statements, students suggested that:

- ✓ The school to prison pipeline and school systems need to be reformed.
 - ✓ Schools' staff, especially teachers, need to encourage students in a positive manner.
 - ✓ Police officers need to use positive approach (not intimidating approach) with young people
 - ✓ The Justice Department should be the one involved with matters of authority concerning students.
 - ✓ Students hope the relationship between authority and young people improve
- ❖ Chairman of the Board, Mr. Fernandez briefly attended the meeting. He welcomed participants and shared few words of encourage with the students.

❖ **Under the New/Old Business:**

During this phase of the agenda the following announcements were made:

✓ The Harlem Youth Court program was briefly discussed. Participants were encouraged to visit the organization and learn about their great program.

✓ Chair discussed about the orientation event to be held on January 14th @ 9:00am, by the Manhattan Borough President Office. The same event will be hosted by: CB12M's Youth and Education Committee, H.S. For Health Careers & Sciences, and the H.S. for Media and Communications- GWEC. All the attending participants were invited

✓ Chair also discussed the committee's first Saturday meeting that is on schedule for February 7th. The committee is planning to have a students' panel discussion and she asked members of the committee for their opinions in regards to the topic for discussion. Member Luna, proposed the immigration reform topic, and chair also thought that since the student brought the topic of school to prison pipeline it could be a good topic. Mrs. Luna responded suggesting that both topics may be taken in consideration for discussion. Mrs. Smith, assistant chair agreed to the proposed idea.

✓ "Why should people walk," was another event announced by the Chair. Although the event was written incorrectly on the meeting's agenda, she clarified that the purpose of this event is to discuss about physical exercises like walking, which may helps improve people's health. At this event other walking programs including Isabella Geriatric Center's program will be discussed. This event will be held on Wednesday January 28th @ 5:30pm- Location Isabella Geriatric Center

The meeting adjourned at 8:53pm