

Youth, Education & Libraries Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2015

Committee Members Present: *Judith Insell, Tisha Jackson, Jen Silverman (public member)*

Meeting called to order by Committee Chair- Judith Insell at 6:45 P.M
Introductions were made by all present.

Presentation: "The State of school District 6"
Superintendent of School District 6, Manuel Ramirez

**Miriam Aristy-Farer, President of Community Education Council 6 (CEC6) was also on-hand to present data re: Dist. 6.*

The focus of Superintendent Ramirez's presentation was to outline his overall agenda for District 6. Appointed to his position in September 2014, Mr. Ramirez has been actively engaging the communities of his district (Hamilton Heights/ Washington Heights/ Inwood), community boards, community based organizations, school administrations, teachers, students, parents in efforts to reach the goal of unity amongst all parties concerned with the education of the children of District 6. He has visited every school in the district at least 3 times, to get a sense of each school's culture, school needs, accessing principal effectiveness, and to make an overall quality review, in efforts to strengthen the performance of the District 6 schools and to enact the Chancellor's initiatives. He is charged to supervise schools that serve grades Pre-8 (Elementary/Middle School). Next year, based on collected data, he will be adding to his portfolio the 4 co-located High Schools located in the George Washington HS Campus building, due their need for additional supervision. Sup. Ramirez has a background in leadership on the Middle & High Schools level.

Some of the issues presented to Superintendent Ramirez, by the attendees of our meeting were the following:

Co-locations of schools: *Sup. Ramirez is working towards having co-located schools work in a more collaborative fashion, where the schools share resources (professional development for teachers).*

Charter School co-locations with DOE school: *Sup. Ramirez has no authority over the charter schools; they are governed by NYSED.*

Academic Intervention: *Providing academic support to students on Saturdays. Many schools are open on Saturdays. His goal is have every school open on Saturday, starting fall 2015, providing academic, artistic & sports components in their programming.*

Trailers used as classrooms: *One particular school annex, in CB9, is discussed. Sup. Ramirez refers to the structure as a "mini-school/mini-building." The objection of Chair Insell is that the "mini-building " is occupying a large*

Youth, Education & Libraries Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2015

amount of schoolyard space, hindering the student's use of the schoolyard for physical activities. Sup. Ramirez will follow up on the schoolyard issue.

Sup. Ramirez has pledged to stay connected with the community. His desire is to have all concerned parties, in the each community in his district, work as a unified force to raise the levels of the schools.

Presentation: Proposed Charter School: WHIN Music Community Charter School, David Gracia

The proposed school would focus on providing a block of music education each day to their students. The targeted population is elementary school. The WHIN Program has been presenting afterschool programming to students in Washington Heights for the past few years. Mr. Gracia noted that the school will be applying for a co-location status, but they would prefer to have their own building.

CEC6 President Miriam Aristy-Farer voiced her opposition to the school, as proposed, stating that District 6 was not in need of any new elementary schools. She suggested that Mr. Gracia work towards having his music education programming provided to existing schools, during existing school schedules.

Presentation: Proposed Charter School: Sankofa School for Boys, Sabrina Francis

Ms. Francis, a member of CB9 and a member of the schools founding education team, presented some background on the proposed school. The school is designed to have a focus on young boys in the Harlem Community, particularly presenting the students and their families with educational, emotional, and social support. More information is to be provided by the school's founder, Ashanti Chiumurega. The school is looking for a Letter of Support from the YEL Comm, in regards to their 3rd application for a state charter.

Updates:

Teachers College Community School

Joel Mentor, TCCS SLT CB9 Community Rep. was scheduled to present an update, but was unable to attend. He sent a brief update, via email, that was relayed by Chair Insell.

TCCS is currently focused on to main issues:

- The search for a new principal is set to begin this summer, after the unexpected death of the founding principal Jeanne Worrell-Breeden*
- The search for a new provider to run the school's after school program*

Youth, Education & Libraries Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 10, 2015

**Mr. Mentor has requested that the TCCS leadership provide more information to the YEL Comm. regarding both issues.*

Columbia Secondary School

After attending a follow up meeting to Principal Nightengale's report to the CB9 General Board in May, Chair Insell reported that CSS now has a pressing issue:

In addition to the school's on-going issue co-locating with 2 other schools, the DOE is mandating that they accept the placement of 50 students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in fall 2015. These students would not have taken the academic placement test required by CSS as the school's criteria to be a "screened school." Some of these 50 additional students may require a classroom placement of a "self-contained" classroom, suggesting that CSS has the space to designate a classroom to be used solely for these newly placed students. Principal Nightengale has asked that the CB9 YEL Comm. to aid her with this newly presented issue.

Committee Discussions:

Debrief: "District 6: Lives Healthy Expo"

The YEL Comm., along with CEC6 President Miriam Aristy-Farer, had a brief discussion of the event (assessment of the venue, attendance, vendors, etc.)

Looking towards fall 2015, Chair Insell suggested that CEC6 & the CB9 YEL Comm. collaborate on a forum regarding Arts Education. CEC6 President Aristy-Farer agrees to pursue the idea of the forum.

District Needs Statement FY16:

All committee members are asked to review last years' statement and submit any suggestions for next year's needs statement. The statement is due this summer to the CB9 Board office.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 P.M.