

**Youth, Education & Libraries Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 11, 2015**

Committee Members Present: Judith Insell, Yvonne Stennett, and Tisha Jackson,  
Public Member Jen Silverman

CB 9 Member Joel Mentor also present.

Meeting called to order by Committee Interim Chair- Judith Insell at 6:45 P.M

Introductions were made by all present.

**Presentation:** Ms. Christina Nyanteh of "H.A.P.P.I" announced two free college trips being sponsored by the organization during Spring Break. On Monday April 6<sup>th</sup> they will visit Long Island University (Brooklyn Campus) and on Wednesday April 8<sup>th</sup> the trip will be to Montclair University and Seaton Hall. The Committee and audience were asked to encourage and refer any interested High School students to contact the organization.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/HAPPI-Program-at-Harlem-Hospital-Center/202922943116081>

**Presentation:** Ms. Maria Staack, a 14year old student, living in CB9 and attending Hunter College High School, on a self-motivated campaign to improve the reading materials and bring research to the newly developed Teen Lounge at the Hamilton Branch Library. Ms. Staack is lobbying for a wider variety of reading materials as well as the creation of events and activities such as clubs, book & science fairs. Ms. Staack indicated that currently the activities that occur in the Teen Center are recreational in nature. For teens who are in need of doing research, there does not exist the opportunity to do so, further she believes that students should not have to travel outside of their community to find such resources in order to advance their educational development.

Members of the Committee and those in the audience gave suggestions on getting more attention brought to the issue: join forces with Youth & Education Committee of CB 11, using social media to alert other young people about the issue, visiting the library at 124<sup>th</sup> St. (George Bruce Branch) to see what resource materials are available at that branch

**Announcement:** Mr. Shameek Robinson, a member of New York City College Line, shared information re: a collaboration between Gates Foundation and Goddard, a free website was launched to resources, information on college fairs, scholarships and more.

The website is: CACNYINC.org

**Announcement:** Mr. Jeremy Reyes, of the District Attorneys Office, spoke of the “High School Summer Internship Program” at the DA’s office from July 6<sup>th</sup> to August 14, 2015 , Monday thru Friday 9 A.M to 4:30 P.M. Applications are now available. The due date is March 27, 2015, There is a weekly stipend of \$150.00 offered.

**Presentation:** Mr. Joel Mentor, Member of CB9, Community Representative for the Student Leadership Team (SLT) for Teachers College Community School (TCCS), and also a parent of a student at TCCS, provided an update on the school (provided by the Leadership Team for TCCS, lead by Nancy Stream).

***Student Recruitment:***

- 4 open houses held,
- 3 kindergarten fairs attended,
- 180 recruitment packets mailed to daycare centers, clinic, churches,
- TCCS parent volunteer posted 300 flyers,
- 1 advertisement ran in the Amsterdam News
- digital copy of flyer and announcements through Harlem4kids digest, Harlem Onestop and CB9 office,
- fielded 175+ email and phone inquiries at TC

\*Information on number of families from CB9 that applied not available as yet.

***3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Test Prep:***

TCCS organized a “Connections Academy” to prepare 3<sup>rd</sup> graders for April citywide standardized tests. 98% of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade enrolled in the “Connections Academy,” an effort led by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers operating from 3:30 P.M to 5:00 P.M. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The goal is to provide a controlled test-taking environment. The 2% not attending the program “opted out” of taking the test in April.

***Staff recruitment:***

Applications for 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers will post in late March. Other positions will be posted based on budget implications, when released by DOE. Hiring Committee consist of 2 teachers, 2 parents, school principal, Teachers College VP of Office of School & Community Partnerships and DOE representative. Interviews will be held in April. A strong effort is being made to recruit male teachers of color.

***Student Retention:***

Most parents are very satisfied with school and quality of education being offered. DOE 2013-2014 school environment survey, of which 97% of the parents completed, showed that 99% of the parents would recommend the school to other parents and 98% believe the school is headed in the right direction.

Those families that have left the school, left because they have moved out of the area, have children in multiple grades & want them in same school, or received opportunities for scholarships at prestigious schools.

***Additional Building Space Update:***

Discussions are underway between DOE. The content of the discussions have not been made public, but they directly involve Chancellor Farina.

\*Parents that were in attendance at the YEL Comm. meeting indicted their frustrations with the lack of information regarding the conversations of additional space. They recognize that very shortly, the school will out grow its' current space and want to be included on the conversations with the TCCS leadership. Other community members present at the meeting commented that: the school seems private/elite and does not to want to encourage enrollment of a certain sectors of the community...that the open house session was presented in a negative and discouraging spirit towards some prospective parents. The TCCS Parents Association President commented that this is not the case and that if this is the perception of the recruitment practices, it most certainly is not what she or other parents encourage.

**Public Discussion:** Regarding the "School at Columbia," a community member who has applied a number of times through the lottery, once again made it through the lottery but was then told that there is no more available space. It appears to her that space for parents with the ability to pay full tuition were subsequently made available. She relays that this has happened more than once to her and to many other community residents of color and she believe this to be an unfair practice.

The Committee Chair indicated that fellow Board Member and Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, Victor Edwards is following up directly with a Columba University representative on this issue and other issues concerning the school and she would communicated back any results and or updates of those conversations.

**Presentation:** Ms. Miriam Aristy-Farer, President of Community Education Council (CEC) for District 6.

Ms. Farer stated that organized parents can make a school powerful and thus the work of the CEC is to assist parents to become informed and organized so they can advocate for themselves and the education of their children. She continued that schools under the previous administration were grossly underfunded, but finally there is a School Chancellor and an administration that is listening and changes are happening that will positively impact schools ability to be better resourced and meet student need. District 6 has a new District Superintendent that would oversee both middle and high school, and who will be in charge of budgets and decision-making. There will also be no more networks with schools outside of boroughs, all partnering will be with local schools.

With respect to numbers District 6 is not doing well. We are a ELL district and as such, along with low academic achievement based on testing, there is an abundance of social emotional issues that impede educational and social advancement for our children. as well as our teachers ability to teach.

CEC passes resolutions on issues such as co-location, fiscal inequities, and educational policies. CECs are playing a major role in organizing a "Day of Protest" (Thursday, March 12, 2014) as well as in the "Rally to Protect Our Children" planned for March 28<sup>th</sup> at the Governors Office at 633 Third Avenue,-all are encouraged to have a green balloon. The CEC also holds lobby visits in Albany.

Ms. Farer, left the Committee with the following information:

1. "District 6 Proficiency Level Results on the New York State 2014 Math Test (Grades 3-8) By Subgroup
2. "District 6 Proficiency Level Results on the New York State 2014 ELA Test (Grades 3-8) By Subgroup
3. "District 6 Results of the New York State 2014 ELA Test (Grades 3-8 ) All Students
4. "District 6 NYC Department of Education NYC Results on the New York state 2013 ELA Test (grades 3-8)

**Announcement:** Judith Insell on behalf of Victor Edwards, announced a program called: PHAT Time, a social media company is offering 4 week (12 hour) pilot Mobile App course for 30 Harlem Students (ages 13-18, beginning in mid March. This is a free program. To sign up a student, please an email to: [info@phattime.com](mailto:info@phattime.com)

Include the student's name, address, phone number, and an adult reference.)

**Committee Discussion re: YEL Spring Youth Expo:**

Committee will not host a its' own Spring Expo, but will have a follow up call to discuss partnering and other options for an event this year.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 P.M.