



COMMUNITY BOARD 11

*Serving Communities of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston,
Hollis Hills, Little Neck & Oakland Gardens*

46-21 Little Neck Parkway, Little Neck, NY, 11362

Tel (718) 225-1054 Fax (718) 225-4514

email: QN11@cb.nyc.gov

Website: nyc.gov/queenscb11

*Jerry Iannece
Chair*

*Susan Seinfeld
District Manager*

COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: Board Members
FROM: Laura James, Chair
Education Committee
Date: March 31, 2011

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CB 11 Education Committee Report

On March 24, 2011 the Education Committee met. In attendance were Board Members Laura James, Chair, George Karahalios, Roy Giusetti, JoAnn Ferrari, Henry Euler, Chris Scherer, Edith Basom, Steve Behar, Steve Newman and Mel Meer. Also present was Assemblymember Ed Braunstein and Christina Coutinho, Community Assistant.

PS 130 All students who applied from District 26 have been accepted, but Auburndale Improvement would like to make sure local children to get first priority. There also seems to be an information problem because many local parents are not aware this school is an option for them. Other schools in the area are at slightly below capacity. It was suggested that we write a letter to the Schools Chancellor.

School budgets It has been reported that principals were asked to give back 30% of their budget surplus, which was reduced from 50%. One of the committee members informed the group that he heard that in response principals were spending down these surpluses before the end of the year and using the funds for their respective schools.

Education Forum The possibility of inviting DOE and other NYC officials to participate in a district-wide education forum, sponsored by CB 11 and open to all residents, was discussed. It was decided that at the present time such a meeting would not attract sufficient response due to the absence of a single rallying cause. If such a cause, or collection of causes, is present we will discuss this item again, and will work in conjunction with CDEC and the PTA Presidents Council.

Gifted and Talented Students This is another continuing issue in our district, as it is felt the DOE ignores areas such as Northeast Queens and assumes that our children are well supported by the education system. The programs themselves have been diluted to accept students with lower qualifying test scores than in previous years. Almost all of the consideration (including the so-called "fair student funding") in recent years has been focused on the lower performers and the reduction of the "achievement gap."

Specialized Schools Queens has far fewer specialized high school seats than the other four boroughs. By definition, potential students are required to take the Specialized High School Student Aptitude Test (SHSSAT) for admission. The number of seats in these schools by borough is as follows: Brooklyn 5200, Manhattan 3700, Bronx 3400, Staten Island 1014, and Queens 415 (Queens Science at York College). These numbers do not include schools such as Townsend Harris, Hunter, Bard, Beacon and others. The point was raised that transportation issues in Queens often result in travel times and difficulties that are on a par with travel to other boroughs. Increased classes for gifted and talented students

at existing schools is a possible near term solution; the building of a specialized school in NE Queens would be a longer term goal.

High Achieving High School Students It was noted that another likely indicator that the needs of high achieving students are not taken into consideration is the falling number of Intel Science semi-finalists in most of the City schools. Locally, Francis Lewis High School is an exception to this rule.

Overcrowding in High Schools Assemblyman Ed Braunstein said that he would continue to follow up on this issue in Albany. Subsequent to the meeting he circulated a recent response he received from the DOE. Although much of the information was previously known, it did mention that the two remaining Queens high school projects in the City's current five-year capital plan (2010-2014) are a new 1,000 seat high school in Hunters Point and a 400 seat annex to Richmond Hill High School. David Solano has also corresponded with various DOE officials, most recently Juan Mendez, the Superintendent of Queens High Schools and Marc Sternbergh, Deputy Chancellor, Division of Portfolio Planning.

Elected Officials We feel it is imperative to enlist our elected officials to assist in the above mentioned matters, and others such as the funding formula that puts schools in northeast Queens at a disadvantage. In the near term, we will set up a meeting with Senator Avella to discuss the outstanding local Education issues. Assemblyman Braunstein pledged his support for the Committee's work and will help us get answers to education questions that arise.