



The City of New York

Queens Community Board 11

Serving the Communities of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston, Hollis Hills
Little Neck and Oakland Gardens

Christine L. Haider Chairperson / **Susan Seinfeld** District Manager

To: Board Members

From: Laura James & Alim Gafar, Committee Co- Chairs

Re: CB 11 Education Committee Report

Date: November 20, 2014

The Community Board 11 Education Committee held a meeting on November 19, 2014. In attendance at the meeting were: Laura James and Alim Gafar, Co-Chairs, Ted Teng, Mel Meer, Lana Bind, Christina Scherer, Sila Asa, Ocelia Claro, CB 11 2nd Vice Chair and Eileen Miller, CB 11 3rd Vice Chair, community member David Solano, District Manager Susan Seinfeld and Danielle Giunta, the new Acting Superintendent of School District 26.

Ms. Giunta introduced herself and gave a brief summary of her career. She was raised in the CB 11 area and attended District 26 schools (PS 205, JHS 74), graduating from Cardozo High School. She started teaching in Washington Heights, later becoming an AP and then a principal in District 25. Prior to her appointment as Acting Superintendent on October 21st, she was a Network Leader covering D. 24, D. 25 and D. 28, all in Queens.

Ms. Giunta stated that financial constraints in the district were the biggest concern since the district does not receive federal funds available to other districts. Financial realities impede instructional vision. She also discussed the controversy surrounding the Gifted and Talented program. There is a proposal to require that fifth grade students be retested to remain in a G & T class in middle school, modeled after D. 30. Students are tested only before kindergarten. They want to look at tests, report cards, behavior and attendance. Alim Gafar stated that MS 67 added a G & T class for those who earned the right to the class.

Mel Meer questioned the placement of Ms. Giunta in the position without the consultation with the CEDC and community (CR C-37, Sections IV, V and VI) as the law requires. He feels that the prior administration marginalized parents and that this may be continuing. Power was taken away from the superintendents including staff. Ms. Giunta stated that there are restructuring plans that will be announced in January that may enhance the position and add staff, including more community staff to work with parents. She praised her current assistant, Lori Butera. There was also discussion about parent coordinators and whether or not a school did not have one; the funds could be used to pay for other academic or arts teachers.

We then discussed overcrowding. Co-location was one of the methods used but Alim Gafar stated that the Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council was against this. Mel Meer and Christina Scherer advised Ms. Giunta that the Board had supported, along with the Auburndale Improvement Association, the return of PS 130 to District 26. This would

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have possibly alleviated the need for a new school. It was noted that the DOE does not seem to look at the high costs of busing D. 25 students to PS 130 and the busing of local D. 26 students, who live right next to PS 130, to other schools. The committee asked Ms. Giunta to see what steps she could take to have PS 130 returned to D. 26.

We briefly discussed the controversy about the location of the new school on 47 Avenue. Ms. Giunta said that there is a building design and artwork design but there has to be more discussion about the traffic patterns around the school. The opening is scheduled for September 2017.

We also discussed that schools in D. 26 are getting overcrowded, not only due to the increase in young people moving to the area, but through fraud, use of friends and relatives addresses in order to attend D. 26 schools.

Alim Gafar reported that PS 98 in Douglaston, to the contrary, is underutilized and has less than 200 students. The school had a population of about 300. PS 98 lost the self-sustaining, after-school program and many parents left. There is a concern that the DOE would want to merge schools. Ms. Giunta indicated that a merger or depopulation was not being considered for PS 98, although they were looking into other ways to increase the building's utilization.

Alim Gafar discussed the new School Accountability Reports and Ms. Giunta showed examples of the new reports. The alphabet ratings have been eliminated and there is a "holistic" look at schools. (These reports are on-line.)

Ms. Giunta discussed Chancellor Farina's plans to have more community ties and collaboration between teachers, students, and parents. Ms. Farina wants to reach out to other programs outside of the DOE. She also said that ELL, English Language Learners, classes need improvement.

After-school programming in middle school was discussed, since the Mayor said he wanted every middle school student to have access to free after-school programs. Ted Teng, who is managing programs in Manhattan, discussed the process. City funds were made available for CBO's (community based organizations) to apply for the SONYC program. Principals are not supposed to opt out if they have the space available. CBOs can also file RFPs (Request for Proposal) to run after-school programs in community centers. Ted said that very few CBOs have applied citywide for the community center based programs. D. 26 has no new after-school programs. The committee asked Ms. Giunta to find out and report back to us as to which middle schools in D. 26 already have after-school programs, which were eligible to apply for the money and which ones actually applied. If a middle school did not apply that was eligible, then the committee wanted to know why.

Mel Meer stated that D.26 has several self-sustaining programs in music, in particular, and told Ms. Giunta that every school should have an art or music program.

The members thanked Ms. Giunta for attending the meeting.