



The City of New York
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD #1

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DISTRICT MANAGER

Education, Youth & Young Adults Services Committee Minutes

February 12th, 2025

Zion Baldwin, Committee Chairperson

Stephane Calzado, Co-Chairperson

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Introduction and Meeting Agenda

- Committee Chair Zion Baldwin introduces himself as the chair of the education and youth committee and begins the meeting.
- Committee Chair Zion Baldwin requests presenters to keep their presentations to 20 minutes or less to allow time for questions.
- The agenda is approved by the board members after a motion and discussion.
- District Manager Anthony Jordan mentions that the meeting is being live-streamed on YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook.

Introduction of ACI Charter School Network

- Derek Spaulding, CEO of AECI Charter School Network, introduces the network and apologizes for not attending earlier.
- AECI has two schools: AECI One (Architecture, Engineering, and Social Industries) and AECI Two, which will open in September 2025.
- Tyler Williams, the inaugural principal of the new middle school, introduces himself and shares his background in education and the Bronx community.
- The middle school will have a focus on STEM and will follow the same core values and mission as the high school.

Details of the Middle School Program

- Tyler Williams outlines the academic program, including a nine-period day, double blocks of ELA and math, and ICT classes for students with disabilities.

- The school will have a "win period" for students who need extra support, either for struggling or enrichment.
- The school will offer sports programs, including cheerleading and various sports teams, and will collaborate with the high school for peer tutoring and mentoring.
- The school will have a uniform policy and will focus on preparing students for college-level courses by the time they graduate.

Questions and Answers from the Board

- Committee Chair Zion Baldwin asks if the middle school will offer the same services as the high school, including ICT classes and win periods.
- Tyler Williams confirms that the middle school will offer the same services and will adapt them to the needs of younger students.
- A board member asks about the teacher retention rate and how the school plans to keep teachers.
- Tyler Williams and Derek Spaulding explain that they have a high retention rate (90%) and plan to replicate the support systems that work well in the high school.

Space and Enrollment Concerns

- A board member inquires about the space availability in the building and the current enrollment numbers.
- Derek Spaulding states that the high school can accommodate up to 500 students and that the middle school will occupy the same building.
- The middle school will start with five sections of 25 students each, totaling 125 students in the first year.
- District Manager Anthony Jordan asks about workforce and trade skills training and how the school plans to introduce students to these fields.

Workforce and Trade Skills Training

- Derek Spaulding explains that the school has coursework designed to address architecture, engineering, and construction, starting from ninth grade.
- The school has board members who work in the construction industry, helping to secure partnerships and internships for students.
- All ninth and tenth graders are getting OSHA certified, and the school plans to offer paid internships for 11th and 12th graders.
- The school will also have guidance counselors for each grade level to support students' transition to high school and beyond.

Public Questions and Final Remarks

- A member of the public asks about sports programs and how the school plans to channel sports activities to younger students.
- Tyler Williams confirms that the school will offer sports programs and will use high school students to teach and mentor middle school students.
- Another public member asks about English as a second language support and internship opportunities.
- Derek Spaulding explains that the school will offer ENL support and is working on securing paid internships for older students.

Introduction of Bronx Health REACH Program

- Mario Less, founder and CEO of Equity Design, introduces the Bronx Health REACH program and its partnership with Equity Design.
- Diana, the program coordinator, explains the goals of the program, which include improving nutrition, physical activity, and access to food services in schools.
- Jim Lammers from Street Lab discusses their role in creating and activating public spaces for community use.
- The program aims to create sustainable physical activity and health programs in schools by involving stakeholders and community members.

Community Engagement and Impact

- The program uses an equity lens to assess needs, challenges, and data to develop equitable and sustainable solutions.
- Street Lab works with schools to create and activate spaces for physical activity, engaging the entire community.
- The program has partnered with over 30 schools in the Bronx, providing technical assistance and on-site support.
- The program focuses on sustainability and community advocacy to ensure long-term impact and policy changes.

Examples of Successful Program Implementation

- The program has helped schools create school wellness councils, establish wellness policies, and increase physical activity outside of gym class.
- Equity Design and Bronx Health REACH have worked with schools like PS 18, PS 32, and PSMS 5 to address specific needs and challenges.

- The program has provided access to physical activity through initiatives like the PSA team and open streets projects.
- The program has also engaged parents and community members to support and sustain the initiatives.

Final Remarks and Next Steps

- The board members express their support for the programs and ask for a letter of support for the Bronx Health REACH program.
- The board agrees to create a letter of support and invites the presenters to the final board meeting for a similar presentation.
- The meeting concludes with a group photo and final remarks from the presenters.

Impact of Technical Assistance and Partnerships

- Equity Design from Guns Down, Life Up highlights the 300+ hours of engagement through technical assistance and support with schools, emphasizing increased partnerships, resources, and volunteerism.
- Equity Design discusses their work in the Bronx, particularly in the South Bronx, helping schools with over 36 days of school streets programming and over 100 hours of youth engagement.
- Equity Design explains the inclusive nature of these spaces and the compromise involved in street closures, such as temporary parking and access changes.
- Equity Design mentions the relocation of a program from Jackson Ave to a quieter block due to negative impacts on the initial location.

Challenges and Solutions in School Programs

- Equity Design talks about the challenges faced by PSA Team, including a denied reapplication for street closure permits and alternative methods for block closures.
- Equity Design describes a successful partnership with USA Cycling and Major League Soccer, leading to the first Bike Fest and plans for a larger community Duathlon.
- Equity Design emphasizes the importance of community support and collaboration with the youth and education committee to build a healthier South Bronx.

Community Support and Safety Concerns

- Equity Design discuss the need for a letter of support and the importance of community engagement.
- Committee Co-Chair Stephanie Calzado raises concerns about the safety of children playing in the street due to drug activity and syringes in the area.

- Equity Design explains the measures taken to ensure safety, including working with the NYPD and Department of Sanitation for cleanups.

Inclusion and Sustainability in Programs

- Member Jacqueline Dejesus discuss the inclusion of students with ICT and other special needs in their programs, emphasizing the importance of a supportive and inclusive environment.
- Member Jacqueline Dejesus highlights the need for safe spaces for young people with autism and other special needs, and the importance of sustainable programs that do not leave schools without resources.
- Member Jacqueline Dejesus encourages thinking bigger and finding innovative ways to activate parks and streets for safe and inclusive play.

Job Fair Planning and Employer Engagement

- Member Joyce Pulphus provides an update on the upcoming job fair at June Turn School, emphasizing the need for employers and community partners to provide resources and support.
- Member Joyce Pulphus discusses the importance of targeting adults between 16 and 26 years old and the need for flexible participation times for employers.
- Member Joyce Pulphus mentions the use of spreadsheets and a master tracker to keep track of employers and their needs.

Final Discussions and Meeting Adjournment

- Committee Co Chair Stephanie Calzado raises concerns about the safety of children playing in the street and suggests exploring other options like a community garden.
- Committee Chair Zion Baldwin moves to adjourn the meeting, and the motion is approved by the group.

Action Items

- Provide a letter of support for the AECI charter school network's middle school expansion.
- Invite the Bronx Health Reach, Street Lab, and Equity Design team to present at the full community board meeting on April 27th.