



Chairman Mohammed Mujumder – District Manager William Rivera

Youth & Education Committee Meeting Summary

May 14, 2026

Board Members Present: Ram Halder, Julio Quinones Jr, Richard Owusu, Roshawn Pettaway, Wajied Hakim

I. Introduction

- A. Committee Description:** The youth & education committee represents the community's interests with regards to education and programs that target the youth and acts as a liaison between community members and the NYC Department of Education including Parent Advocates, PTA's, Educators and Principals, School Safety, the Administration for Children Services, NYC department of Youth & Development and local organizations and nonprofits.

II. Speakers

A. Hannah Leverenz, Community Engagement Specialist at IBO

- Ms. Hannah Leverenz explained the role of IBO in analyzing the city's revenues and spending, especially during budget season. IBO does not run programs or conduct audits.
- Ms. Leverenz summarized key points from the mayor's executive budget related to education, including class size compliance delays, increased funding for teacher hiring, capital projects, special education cost management, childcare provider reimbursements, and library funding baselining. These updates impact resource allocation and program planning.
- The Executive Budget released in May/June undergoes changes before the adopted budget in July (start of the fiscal year).
- Individual school budgets are released around May/June, allowing principals to plan for the fall.
- Community members can provide feedback through city council hearings and by contacting their council members.
- School Leadership Teams (SLTs) are key venues for parents and staff to review and influence school budgets.
- Ms. Leverenz explained the governance structure of NYC public schools: The mayor controls NYC schools and manages the city budget, appointing the Chancellor and majority of PEP members; The Chancellor develops a five-year educational plan and selects superintendents; The PEP approves citywide budgets, funding formulas, contracts, and school co-locations or closings; SCA manages large capital projects like building expansions and renovations; Central DOE handles food services, transportation, school safety, custodial services, and some special education supports; Individual schools, led by principals, manage teacher hiring, programming, curriculum, technology purchases, and school-level funds.
- Ms. Leverenz demonstrated the 'School Budget at a Glance' online tool, showing how to access demographic data, funding sources, and budget allocations for individual schools. This tool aids community members in understanding school funding and advocating for resource needs.
- Ms. Leverenz explained the Fair Student Funding (FSF) formula which considers factors like grade, academic performance, English language learner status, special education needs, and housing instability.
- Title I funds are allocated to schools where at least 60% of students are from low-income households. Title I funds can be used for tutoring, mentoring, parent engagement, and support for students in temporary housing. Parents can participate in Title I Parent Advisory Councils to influence spending decisions.
- Ms. Leverenz noted that schools receive specific funds for class size reduction to hire additional teachers and meet compliance mandates (exemplified by a \$350,000 allocation for one school). Community members can review these allocations and engage with principals to address overcrowding and student-teacher ratios.

- Ms. Leverenz discussed the role of the School Construction Authority (SCA) in managing capital projects and noted upcoming opportunities for community input on school siting and construction proposals; A recent SCA presentation at Community Board 9's Land & Zoning Committee included a school siting proposal with public comment open until June 6.
She encourages leveraging these engagements to address overcrowding and facility needs.
- Ms. Leverenz shared resources including DOE's school building information site which provides detailed data on room counts, AC status, and repairs; the SCA capital plan document outlining ongoing projects and planned projects by school and district; and information on DYCD's Compass after-school program contracts. These resources help community members track facility conditions and program availability.

B. Vanessa Ruiz, Family Leadership Coordinator with School District 8

- Ms. Ruiz discussed the role of School Leadership Teams (SLTs) and encouraged parents to participate in SLTs and utilize publicly available school budget information to advocate for their schools.
- SLTs consist of elected parents and school staff, including principals and PTA presidents.
- SLTs discuss school budgets, educational plans, and alignment with supplemental funding like Title I.
- SLT meetings are open to the public and governed by open meetings law.
- School budget information is publicly accessible online, enabling informed advocacy by parents and community members.

C. Naomi Pena, Director of Community & Family Engagement at Literacy Academy Collective

- Ms. Naomi Pena is Co-Founder and Director of Community and Family Engagement at Literacy Academy Collective.
- She shared her family's struggles with dyslexia and the shortcomings of the public school system in addressing it.
- This organization advocates for systemic change and operates public schools focused on structured literacy.
- Early screening for dyslexia is conducted in NYC schools using specific assessments, but access to results can be challenging for parents.
- Ms. Pena explained the science of reading, it is not a natural process and requires explicit teaching of decoding skills.
- Balanced literacy focuses on language comprehension but neglects decoding, leading to poor outcomes for struggling readers.
- Structured literacy teaches phonemes, syllables, and word patterns systematically.
- Understanding the brain's role in reading helps tailor instruction to student needs.
- Ms. Pena highlighted the prevalence of dyslexia, Dyslexia affects approximately 1 in 5 people and is the most common reading disability worldwide.
- Many students with dyslexia are misdiagnosed or unsupported, leading to academic and social difficulties.
- Studies show high rates of reading disabilities among incarcerated populations.
- As per Ms. Pena, Literacy is a fundamental civil rights issue requiring systemic attention.
- Ms. Pena described the Literacy Academy schools' model, which includes 90-minute daily reading and writing block with small groups focused on skill mastery.
- They integrate social-emotional learning and executive functioning supports.
- Mental health services include school psychologists and external partners providing additional counseling.
- The schools serve both general education and special education students, with transportation provided for eligible students.

D. Brenida Parsons, Bronx CEC Representative to the Panel for Educational Policy

- Mrs. Brenida Parsons, a representative on the Panel for Education Policy (PEP), explained the panel's governance role, including voting on large contracts and school utilization proposals.
- The PEP acts as the policy and oversight body for NYC public schools, including contract approvals and school mergers.
- Mrs. Parsons expressed concerns about delays and inefficiencies in the School Construction Authority's projects and advocated for accountability and timely completion of capital work. She urged Community Education Councils to question SCA about delayed projects and funding needs.
- Mrs. Parsons represents the Bronx Community Education Council on PEP and is also a trustee for the educators' pension fund.

E. Dior St. Hillaire, Bronx Solid Waste Advisory Board

- Ms. St. Hillaire shared information about the Bronx Solid Waste Advisory Board and its goal of developing a Zero Waste Station. The committee noted the connection to youth education, sustainability, environmental literacy, recycling, composting, and civic engagement.

F. Katherine Jimenez, Library Manager at Soundview Library

- Ms. Jimenez Soundview Library Branch Manager attended the meeting and expressed interest in continued collaboration with the Youth & Education Committee.
- The library provides adult computer classes and resume workshops.
- Multilingual book collections reflect community demographics, including Spanish and Bengali and there is an interest in expanding outreach to Bengali-speaking community members, including through Bengali-language books and broader library engagement.
- Free Wi-Fi and printing services are available to patrons.
- The library hosts summer reading programs and community events.

III. New Business

A. Next Meeting: June 11th at 7pm

- B.** Participants discussed challenges in recruiting and retaining teachers in the Bronx, highlighting issues such as lack of parking, high cost of living, and teachers commuting from outside the city. They explored potential incentives like affordable housing and local hiring pathways to attract educators and improve community investment.
- C.** Concerns were raised about inadequate delivery of special education services and poor communication with parents regarding Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Participants stressed the need for clearer explanations, timely service provision, and advocacy support to ensure students receive appropriate accommodations.
- D.** Participants discussed barriers to parental engagement in school activities, including parents working multiple jobs, untimely meeting notices, and lack of accessible information. They advocated for improved communication strategies, including printed materials, timely notices, and parent coordinators to foster stronger school-family partnerships.
- E.** Community members emphasized the importance of collaboration among schools, community boards, and advocacy groups to improve educational outcomes. They proposed initiatives like Bronx Day to build relationships and share information, and highlighted the role of newsletters and direct communication in empowering families.
- F.** Participants suggested implementing school report cards displaying literacy and math rates to increase transparency and accountability. They discussed concerns about teacher engagement and the need for coaching to improve instructional quality and student outcomes.
- G.** Updates were provided on school crossing guard shortages and upcoming school expansions to address overcrowding. Community members discussed efforts to secure crossing guards and the planned addition of classrooms to accommodate growing student populations.
- H.** Board Member Richard Owusu raised concerns regarding access to occupational therapy and related services for students, including concerns connected to P188X and P138X. The committee discussed the importance of ensuring students receive all mandated related services, including occupational therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy, counseling, and any other services included in students' Individualized Education Programs. Council Member Amanda Farías' office provided a letter to Board Member Owusu regarding occupational therapy services at P188X and P138X, including updates from DOE on temporary provider coverage, Related Service Authorizations, the pending NYSED licensure process for a therapist, and the Related Service Weekend Academy Program as an interim support.

IV. Notifications

- A.** Grand Concourse Academy Charter School Expansion (625 Bolton Avenue)
- B.** Soundview Library expressed interest in attending future Youth & Education Committee meetings and collaborating on events.
- C.** Bronx SWAB introduced opportunities for future youth and environmental education collaboration.
- D.** The committee noted future opportunities to connect meeting topics to the District Needs Statement, Strategic Policy Statement, school budget education, and possible Budget Committee work.
- E.** Brenida Parsons, Bronx elected CEC Representative to the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) announced that the next Panel for Educational Policy meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 20, 2026, at 6:00 PM at The Michael J. Petrides School, 715 Ocean Terrace, Staten Island, NY 10301.
- F.** The committee noted that future agenda items may include school budget education, literacy and reading support, education governance, youth civic engagement, library partnerships, environmental education, and special education/family support resources.
- G.** The committee received and reviewed a letter from Council Member Amanda Farías to Board Member Richard Owusu regarding occupational therapy services at P188X and P138X. The letter will be included with the committee materials for reference.

OFFICE INFO

District Manager William Rivera - wrivera@cb.nyc.gov
 Deputy District Manager Shirley SanAndres-Alonzo - ssalonzo@cb.nyc.gov
 District Director Tanéyah Jolly - tajolly@cb.nyc.gov
 Phone (718) 823-3034 - Fax (718) 823-6461 - Office Email bx09@cb.nyc.gov - Website nyc.gov/bxcb9
 Office Hours - Monday thru Friday 9AM to 5PM