



The City of New York

Queens Community Board 11

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

Michael Budabin, Chair / **Joseph Marziliano**, District Manager

TO: All Board Members
FROM: Justin Chew, Education Committee Chair
DATE: July 15, 2022
RE: Examination of the NYC School Disciplinary Code.

On Thursday, June 16, 2022, a meeting of the CB11 Education Committee was held via Zoom teleconference to discuss the NYC School Disciplinary Code (DC).

Present

Michael Budabin, Board Chair
Justin Chew, Education Committee Chair
Henry Euler, 3rd Vice Chair
Eileen Miller
Adriana Aviles
Jena Lanzetta
Rosemarie Guidice
Stephan Popa

CB11 Staff

Joseph Marziliano, District Manager
Christina Coutinho, Community Associate

Mr. Chew opened the meeting by stating that tonight's meeting is to examine the NYC School Disciplinary Code (DC).

The first item discussed was DC section B21 which is "insubordination". The Department of Education sets the DC. Mr. Chew said the DC was changed because there was inequality for students of color. Students of color were receiving higher disciplinary action for the same infractions. Mr. Chew said that it is increasingly difficult to suspend a student. Ms. Aviles stated that students of color make up the majority of students in NYC City schools, therefore, it is about numbers not race. Mr. Popa suggested suspending for an action, i.e., endangering a student. Ms. Aviles stated that the current DC was written under Mayor de Blasio and is due to expire this year. She said that suspension are for physical altercations and/or bodily harm. There is nothing for verbal abuse toward a teacher. Ms. Aviles stated that each school is different and should be reviewed separately. There are guns and other weapons in the schools which is more serious. The new chancellor is reviewing the DC. Ms. Lanzetta asked what this Committee will be doing regarding the issues discussed, i.e., writing a letter? She feels that having doors locked and more security in the schools is needed.

The second item discussed was smoking in the school building. Mr. Chew feels that there should be some sort of repercussion for smoking or vaping in the building. Mr. Euler asked what is the

current punishment and is there in-school suspension? Mr. Chew said that the principal will call the parents if the student is under the influence. He also added that there is in-school suspension that but rarely takes place. Mr. Budabin asked that since the DC is due to expire, will it automatically be addressed and updated upon expiration? Ms. Aviles said she was not sure how it is handled. Mr. Budabin discussed that each case is different. He stated that there is a lot of value in the Board taking a position to get further information but once we dig deep, he feels less comfortable because of lack of knowledge and experience. Mr. Chew agreed and requested a general letter to the DOE trying to stress the point that a little more discipline is needed in the DC. Ms. Aviles stated that the Cardozo School Leadership Team had a meeting and discussed and voted on metal detectors. It was voted down. Mr. Budabin stated that the DC is Citywide. He discussed how teachers might not feel protected and this can be included in the DC. Mrs. Guidice asked why administrators would not want to suspend students? Ms. Lanzetta and Ms. Aviles both answered that administrators want to protect the school's image.

The third item discussed was that fights, promoting violence of any kind, should be an automatic suspension. This was removed from the DC. Mr. Chew said this also falls under the fourth item for discussion – the victim in the attack/assault should not be the one that is transferred (safety transfer). He said there were several fights this year in Cardozo HS. He said students with an IEP are usually not suspended or transferred. He said that a suspension is normally five days. Mr. Popa discussed the safety of the victim, referring to retaliation. Mr. Chew said that the victim is asked to leave, not the attacker. Mrs. Miller discussed that the aggressor should be transferred not the victim. Mr. Chew said there should be an option. Mr. Euler said this should be case by case and agreed that the attacker should be transferred. Discussion ensued on enrollment of the local high schools and how several students are going to private schools due to safety. Ms. Aviles said that Cardozo is over capacity. Mr. Chew said that enrollment in Cardozo has decreased. The school picks 50% of the students and the other 50% the DOE picks. Mr. Budabin said that there are several different opinions. He suggested that a representative from the DOE speak to the Board at a general meeting, maybe September, to discuss what they are doing to ensure that 2022-2023 is better than the last couple of years. Mr. Chew said that a letter should be written to the DOE with points of concern. Mr. Budabin said the letter should note the incidents in the district's schools, the pressure on the teachers and parents and include a request that the DC be stricter. Ms. Aviles suggested to discuss metal detectors, security doors, more security guards versus discussing the DC, since it is Citywide. Mr. Budabin said that he is not comfortable with the Board making specific requests due to the lack of experience in this matter. He felt that raising the concerns and asking the DOE what they are going to do to fix it was a better approach. Mr. Chew agreed. He then reviewed the points that would be included in the letter; the shootings near Francis Lewis HS and Cardozo HS, teachers and parents have raised the questions regarding the DC and school safety, the DC has been watered down, what will the DOE do to help this matter and can a representative come before the Board. Ms. Lanzetta and Mr. Euler both agreed with general questions and to let the DOE say how they will correct. Mrs. Guidice agreed with Ms. Aviles that the Board should focus on the safety, metal detectors, police in schools and community safety.

A motion was made to approve the points of concern to the DOE by Mr. Popa. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Giudice. The Committee voted unanimously in favor. The motion carried.

Lastly, Mr. Chew addressed the installation of permanent metal detectors. Random scanning is not enough. He believes that metal detectors should be added. Ms. Aviles said that parents voted down metal detectors. Mr. Budabin would not support a vote for metal detectors. This is a controversial issue, and the full Board should have input. Mrs. Guidice and Ms. Aviles felt the school should have different layers of protection to check for weapons. Mr. Euler agreed. Discussion ensued as to the impact metal detectors have on staff and students. This topic was tabled to a later time within the school year.

Mr. Chew ended the meeting by stating that as a teacher, he feels unsafe. It is just a matter of time that something life-threatening will happen. There are students that carry a gun or other weapons. The Committee responded with sadness to Mr. Chew's comment.

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm.