



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 3

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| **Ilene Altschul**
District 3 Community Superintendent

CEC3 Calendar Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2017, 7:00 PM

P.S. 241 - Auditorium

240 W. 113th St., NYC 10026

(Approved as corrected at the March 20, 2018 Calendar Meeting by all Council members present)

❖ **Call to Order 6:50 PM**

❖ **Roll Call of Members** Kirsten Berger, Iyanga Collins, Daniel Katz, Lucas Liu, Mike McCarthy, Genisha Metcalf, Jean Moreland, Jane Sun, Kim Watkins

Absent Dennis Morgan, Manuel Casanova

DOE Staff: Ilene Altschul, D3 Superintendent, DJ Sheppard, D3Family Leadership Coordinator

❖ **President's Report**

- Council President Watkins spoke about what's right and what's wrong with NYC public schools, specifically the Chancellor's Reg.A-190 process as it applies to proposed changes at 165, 185 & 208 in Harlem and which will be applicable to the next school year, if approved by PEP. Attendees were invited to sign up for public comment on the middle school process for after the DOE presentation.

❖ **Superintendent's Report**

- My Brother's Keeper Grant- Starting the work with Isoke Nia - December 7th and January 11th at PS 241, December 11th and January 8th at Wadleigh
- Appointed Assistant Principal Rebecca Tasticheff at WESS, Nicole Chandonnet at Anderson, Aline Fanord at PS/IS 76, 2 APs at Manhattan School for Children- Kerry Powers and Modesta Peralta
- Moving to SLT consultation for M180
- District 3 was not recipient of Chancellor's Innovation grant but are working collaboratively with the MFSC to proceed with the work around mathematics and increase critical thinking and discourse in the mathematics classes.
Grade 5: January 10, February 7, March 7
Grade 7: January 17, February 12, March 13
- Holding Stakeholder meeting at M185/M208 on December 20th at 1:00 p.m.
 - Council member asked about the possibility of additional 185/208 stakeholder meetings.
Supt Altschul: It would have to be after the New Year, she is happy to do so but would like to see what comes out of this first meeting. This (meeting) is to try to get the schools together. If approved, we will be setting up a transitioning committee.
- Attending PTA meeting at PS 165 on December 21st at 8:00 a.m.
- Joint Public Hearing – M185/M208 January 8th 6:00 p.m.
- Joint Public Hearing – M165/M862 January 9th 6:00 p.m.
- Panel for Educational Policy January 24th 166 Essex Street 6:00 p.m.
- March 1st NYS testing workshop

❖ **New Business**

DOE Office of Enrollment Presentation: *Elimination of Revealed Middle School Rankings* (on file and posted to www.cec3.org), Sara McPhee, DOE Office of Enrollment, Senior Director Middle School Admissions and Sandy Ferguson, Deputy Chief Executive for Admissions, Office of Student Enrollment

- i. Middle School match is district based. You are eligible in your zoned district and if you attend elementary school in a different district you also get that district's choices.

- ii. Address drives eligibility and student academic information.
- iii. Admissions priorities- the order in which student would be matched. Most D3 schools are screened, they see student rank: they get a wide variety of information on students and how many seats school has. All three things equal a middle school match. The matching process is to match the student to the highest ranked school they can.
 - A. D3 Process - Revealed Ranking: Screened schools (using academics to evaluate the student), D3 schools see how families rank them. Unscreened schools do not see the ranking order.
 - i. ELLs were disadvantaged by revealed ranking. Strategizing is/was part of the process and this wasn't always understood by ELL families whose first language was not English.
 - ii. D3 families currently apply to some screened schools that have blind ranking. This added layer is confusing for families and schools.
 - B. How would blind ranking change the process?
 - i. Reduces barriers in the admissions process and promotes equal access for families
 - ii. For families, blind ranking allows them to rank schools in true order of preference
 - iii. For schools, blind ranking means families can choose the school they want.
 - C. Schools can participate in certain diversity pilot programs, geographic, academic or income diversity – all schools are encouraged to apply.

Council Questions and Concerns:

- What are we hoping to achieve?
 - SMcPhee: To make our schools more diverse, have a level of transparency and alleviate tensions for parents. This is part of a number of initiatives of the Chancellor's Diversity Plan. D3 is one of the 3 NYC school districts that has revealed middle school ranking.
- It doesn't increase your chances though the match rate is basically the same?
 - S Ferguson: You see a slight decrease in first choices but you have real first choices.
- Diversity is a real priority in D3 but in practice we have few truly diverse middle schools. How will this increase diversity? How are we going to make this work? A third party consultant would be great in working with a district wide diversity plan, similar to D15 but they have seen very small movement in diversifying their schools, the heavily Hispanic schools have seen very little change.
 - S Ferguson: It's not a dramatic change in D15. When you start making the rest of choices meaningful, families are able to list the ones they actually want. Moving away from racially isolated communities is important, it's happening as a matter of parent choice. A bigger conversations stated with the change
- What percentage in D15 did not get 1st and 2nd choice
 - SMcPhee: Not a marked change. There was a high degree of students getting their top 3 choices.
 - a. Supt. Altschul: In D3, 70-80% get their top 3 choices. We are not anticipating that schools are going to look different. The idea of moving to blind admissions is to give parents more choice. Students presently are limited in their choices. We want it to be a true preference. We are engaging in discussions with principals because they may have to rethink their screening process.
- Is there a way schools can get a waitlist of all students?
 - SMcPhee: We don't have a waitlist as part of middle school admissions process.
- D3 PRINCIPALS:
 - i. Henry Zymeck, Principal, Computer School: D3 has nothing to do with this decision that is being imposed on them by Central. There was no discussion and no chance to refute their presentation which is so superficial and does not look at what actually transpires in schools during the admissions process. I value diversity and access. This completely disavows all the work we've done to ensure that we have diverse schools (in islands) in our district and not by random chance and because we worked tirelessly to encourage it. At present I get to know these kids. I don't have the resources to screen 1000 students effectively, this may bump out kids who are more interested in coming to our school. We are limited by time.
 - a. Supt. Altschul: We are going to engage in conversations again and talk about what screening process can look like and bring in people to talk about it. A lot the schools are going to have to rethink screening processes because they are very involved and take a lot of time.

- ii. Marlon Lowe, Principal, Mott Hall II: Very much against blind admissions proposal. This limits choice. Every parent can list their first choice if they choose to but parents with children whose state assessment was Level 1 or Level 2 feel they are denied choice. That perspective is desperately missing from this conversation. MHII is a diverse learning community that has a substantial number of Level 1s and 2s and the reason that happens is first choice. Because double 4s often want to put their eggs in one or two baskets and this process gives them security at the cost of giving Level 1s and 2s choice. It is an unfortunate decision and makes it impossible to screen students. When you exclusively rely on academic metrics, it favors some and is detrimental to others. But the students that it favors already gain most of the benefits from the process. There are a lot of families that say they are not going to certain middle schools. This process validates that decision. We are hard-working principals in this district and as it stands now, 1s and 2s who list us first have the same chance as other students. The double 4s who did not want us first, will get priority. Revealed Ranking worked for years. I want my 1s and 2s.
 - Council Member asked if Revealed Ranking isn't the answer within the admissions process, what is?
 - Principal Lowe: 1st Choice is the answer. Choice is neutral. You are going on preference and you have all the filters already: grades, conduct, etc. When you use choice as the variable as to who gets considerations you create a more equitable situation. If you are asking why we are still lacking diversity in this district regardless of choice? There are back doors. When families get choices they don't like, oftentimes they are able to get out of it. If you close the back door we would have more diversity.
 - a. Supt. Altschul: K-5 schools are zoned. You now have K-8 demographics based on where you live. In fifth grade, in K-8, they will exercise their options. In K-8 especially, we have a large percentage of students who are struggling because they didn't get into their top choices and they resemble the neighborhood they are in. Higher performing students tend to leave, leaving students who may struggle more.
 - Principal Zymeck: If it's a city wide catchment, every school should look like what the city looks like.
 - a. Supt. Altschul: This (Blind admissions) is not up for discussion, this has already been decided through the Equity and Access process. As of next year, we will be engaging in the blind admissions process.

❖ Public Comment

- i. Mark Diller, Chair, Youth, Education, Libraries Committee, CB7: There are competing equities here. I commend the desire to have folks feel like they have more access but this feels like it comes at the cost of diversity. This enables parents to apply to all the popular schools (and) that will concentrate, rather than deconcentrate, the problems we have with diversity. You need something other than this.
- ii. Toni Smith, Mott Hall II: In the presentation they spoke a lot about increasing choice but I didn't see that an increasing number of students who didn't get their choice were actually getting their choice. The flaw in revealed ranking is how the school chooses the student not how parents choose the school. If you haven't increased a student's probability of getting into a higher performing school, you're creating the fallacy of choice. You can't just leave it up to schools to create their own process. We need an intentional plan to create diversity.
 - a. Supt. Altschul: That is why we are we've been engaging in discussions to leverage this opportunity to also look at diversity be sure to look at what we are using to give students access to certain things.
- iii. Gail Deutsch, PS 199: Concerned that it discounts school tours and feeling the personality of the school. You're not able to go to school and say that you feel it's a great match for your kid. It becomes about grades. How many schools do you get into?
 - a. The first school that you have ranked that accepts you is the school you get in to.
- iv. Jerome Kramer, MS54: The popular middle schools are largely so because the screening process that have been in place for years has worked. It not reasonable to think we are going to get the same outcomes by throwing huge numbers of kids at schools.

- v. Eric Wright, MS54: Disagrees. One of the unintended consequences is that there will be a lot more intensity in the screening process. Screening process has to change. You want something else if you are not going to rank on academic methods.
 - SM: Individual schools made decisions on screening process. It's individual. There is a wide range.
- vi. Katie Miller, MS54/PS87: Randomizing the process does increase choice, it's no choice. The schools in our district are individual. It does not serve the primary stakeholders. Concerned this is going to be pushed through and we are not off to a great start.
 - a. Sandy: Your points are well taken. D3 is on a slower pace with this; it's had an additional year. We want a thoughtful process. We waited until middle school applications were in to start engagement.
- vii. Barbara Denham: This idea was presented 2 years ago and wasn't supported. The expert opinions of the two principals who spoke tonight and the others are not in favor. This is top-down decision making without considering the principals.
- viii. Debby Saito, PS87: How is it going to work? You talk about engagement but then you say it's done.
 - a. SMCphee: We are talking about engagement in what the process is. The decision to have the middle school process be blind is part of the Mayor's plan for Equity and Excellence.
- ix. Kara MacDonald: What struck me is a bullet point on the presentation that showed revealed rankings -disadvantaged families with less access to time and information which undermines diversity. The principals who came here said the opposite is true. How can we add information to those families that would make this process easier?
 - a. Supt. Altschul: Those two (principals) school have diverse populations, we have many school who do not. We have 16 middle school choices and of those 16, 75% of them are not diverse. A lot of the principals have expressed that this process will maintain the student body they've had all along. They want a more diverse population but don't feel this will change it.
- x. Parent in audience: I don't understand the matching process.
 - a. Supt. Altschul: As a parent you rank your school choices. The schools rank all their students. If you don't get your top choice, they keep going down the list until you match. The schools don't know where you rank them. It's the school you rank highest. The school you put highest that is your match, is the one you will get.
- xi. Migdalia Castillio, Civil Complaint Review Board; they investigate abuse of authority: Here to announce that their resources are available to the community.
- xiii. Chi(?), Mott Hall II: As a parent body we are behind our principal. We are concerned about how the truncation will work in real life. We don't have any details about funding, we will surely become a Title 1 school next year. This is a huge issue for us.
 - a. Supt. Altschul: We are aware of your concerns. I have spoken with Rosemary Tafaro, Manhattan Field Support Center re budget. It is accurate that Title 1 funds are based upon the previous year's percentage, I am working with the MFSC to make them aware; we will have to push for some additional funding, there is additional funding for "at risk" but we want to make sure there is additional funding for all students. The superintendent said she will ask Rosemary Tafaro, MFSC, for a breakdown of \$500k and how the amount of funding per school is determined.

❖ **Old Business ~ none**

❖ **Committee Reports**

1. Charter School, Mike McCarthy, Chair: The committee met last week. We are set to focus on how we can continue to call out lack of transparency and at the same time, how we can work with collocated charter schools. We plan to reach out to some charter schools.
2. Middle School, Kristen Berger, Chair: Committee will be meeting at the end of January.
3. The Harlem School Summit is scheduled for Apr. 14. Christopher Emden, Education Professor at Teachers College is one of the confirmed speakers.

❖ **Liaison Reports**

1. P.S. 208, Inyanga Collins, Liaison: A Q&A was held on Nov. 30 re the proposed consolidation of 185/208. Concerns were raised about the consolidation and the teaching style of 185 that might not

fit well with 208. There were general questions about how the decision on the choice of principal was made. The PTA at 208 said they had not been informed about the Dec. 20th meeting.

Supt. Altschul: DJ spoke with the PTA president here this evening and said that the executive board will be there.

2. P.S. 163, Jean Moreland, Liaison: The P.S. 163 Amicus Brief appeal was rejected by the State Court of Appeals. She will be attending the PTA meeting to determine next steps.
3. P.S. 333, Mike McCarthy, Liaison: had a call from CC H Rosenthal's office, due to the construction going on at the school, they are having space issues when it comes to the playground/school yard area. The parents went before CB7 Transportation Committee to ask for 93rd St. closure. They were told to come back next month.

Supt. Altschul comments that play streets are not a good alternative.

4. P.S. 191, Kim Watkins, Liaison: Principal Keville in conjunction with Principal Jenkins of WESS, Principal Xerri of 199, Principal Parker of 452 as well as (principal of the *unintelligible*) and the principal from the new Collegiate School moving into their new building, are trying to put together a coalition of schools to work together.

❖ **Public Comment**

❖ **Adjournment 9:45 PM**