



# CITYWIDE DISTRICT 75 COUNCIL

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CEC District 75  
Special Education

## Executive Officers

**Joseph Williams,**  
President  
**Able Alagbe,**  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
**Maureen Dantzler,**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
**Gloria Smith,**  
Treasurer  
**Aliya Rasool,**  
Public Advocate  
Appointee

## Council Members

**Diamaris Magarin**  
**Alicia Valeus**  
**Charlene Carroll-**  
**Hall**

## End of the Year Report Citywide District 75 Council June 21, 2012

This report provides a summary of the Citywide District 75 Council for the activities pertaining to School Year: July 2011-June 2012 council meetings.

### Current Members:

- Joseph Williams, Public Advocate Appointee and President
- Able Alagbe, First Vice President
- Maureen Dantzler, Second Vice President
- Gloria Smith, Treasurer
- Charlene Carroll-Hall, Council Member
- Diamaris Magarin, Council Member
- Alicia Values, Council Member
- Aliya Rasool, Public Advocate Appointee

### Member Transition: This past year saw the transition of the following individuals:

- Ramona Bisnauth, Council Member
- Gina Pena-Campodonico, Public Advocate Appointee
- Berangere Pierre-Louis, Council Member
- Allison Bridges – Matthew, Council Member
- Dixon Deutsch, Public Advocate Appointee
- Marion R. Lopez, Council Member

### Attendance

The average council attendance was 80%

### Report Formatted By Joe Williams, President

## SUMMARY OF TOPICS

### Busing-OPT

The council formatted a booklet for the parents of District 75 regarding busing and how to navigate the Busing System.

The council presented the Busing Booklet to Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) Executive Director Matthew Berlin and his staff to review. The council and OPT staff worked in conjunction during the summer of 2011 to format an updated version for all students and parents within the NYC Department of Education to use as a guide. The completed booklet was turned over to OPT for review and approval for publication. The booklet was supposed to be distributed at our September 2011 Calendar Meeting, but due to staff changes within OPT the booklet was not ready for presentation and distribution during the September Calendar Meeting at the Michael J. Petrides school in Staten Island.

At the September Calendar Meeting the agenda focused on busing. The council presented the CD75C Busing Report (see attached) to the parents. The Council invited Mr. Campbell, Borough Director for Staten Island, his staff and OPT. During his presentation, Mr. Campbell stated some of the issues outlined in the survey presented by the council and that OPT started to improve upon.

- OPT reorganization will include Borough Directors operating within the five borough as a liaison to schools and parents.
- Communication will continue to be approved by providing better response time to complaints.
- OPT Receives IEP changes twice a day, estimated at 20 changes per day (10 in the am and 10 in the pm).
- Changes are made to the routes, limited time travel and other mandates as soon as the IEP information is entered into the computer.

**Parents' Complaints During The September Calendar Meeting:**

- Time Travel (delays)
- Late pick-up and drop off
- Route changes without proper notification
- Scheduled pick-up times changed repeatedly
- Children without a Para Professional
- Child mandated to be on a mini bus, instead of a full-size bus
- High school students riding with Elementary/ Middle school students
- OPT Customer Service providing parents with a Complaint Number: one parent had 6 complaint numbers without a resolution.

**Resolution:** The council formatted a Busing Complaint Form to provide to the parents during the September Calendar Meeting (20 complaint forms were returned after the meeting). After the meeting the council distributed the complaint forms to the parent coordinators to provide to the parents. We continued to receive complaint forms from parents within District 75, General Education as well as private and charter schools. The council e-mailed all concerns to OPT and followed up with the parent(s) to ensure that all requests were completed.

**Medicaid Claims for Special Education- Related Service: The Citywide District 75 Council Report On Special Education & Medicaid Reimbursement**

As the Citywide District 75 Council we are required to issue a report on the effectiveness of special education services and make recommendations on how to improve them. The parents of District 75 have their children enrolled in a school District that is designated for students with the most severe disabilities. Nearly half of District 75 student needing related services are placed on waiting lists. For example, out of the 525 students who were mandated to receive occupational therapy last year, there were 230 who were on waiting lists at a school in the Bronx. At another school in the Bronx, only 63% of the students who needed counseling actually received it last year, and only 56% of the students who required physical therapy received it. And at another school 60% of the students who required speech/ language therapy were on a waiting list, along with 90% of the students who needed occupational therapy, and 80% of the students who needed physical. We urge the Education and Finance Committees to continue monitoring DOE Medicaid reimbursement claims. The DOE should be able to increase the services it provides to children if it effectively utilizes sources of funding, including Medicaid reimbursement. In a December 2011 article, the New York Times revealed that the New York City Department of Education (DOE) has failed to recover tens of millions of dollars in Medicaid reimbursements for services it provided to special-needs students in recent years. State Health Department data shows that from 2006 to 2010 the \$33 million school-based Medicaid reimbursements received by the city last year were 60 percent lower than they were five years ago. Despite the fact that more than two-thirds of New York special- needs students qualify for Medicaid, the city has lagged far behind the state's other districts in filing claims between 2006 and 2010. The DOE filed no Medicaid claims for nursing services, occupational and physical therapies, psychological, counseling, audiological evaluations or transportation; according to a DOE spokesperson, the DOE did not file Medicaid claims. After new rules took effect in September of 2009, the process has become more cumbersome and "the department lacked the staff and the training to handle the more demanding requirements".

This is unacceptable for the parents of students in District 75 whose children's IEP mandates are not met.

### **Related Service Ms. Helen D. Kaufman, Administrative Assistant Superintendent**

**Clinical & Support Services-District 75** Ms. Kaufman, presented during the October 2011 Calendar meeting. During her presentation she mentioned how technology and strategies have changed in regards to related services. Currently there are 1700 related service providers within district 75. The student population has changed with an increase in alternative assessment, autism and E.D diagnosis. Generalization is not easily achieved. A student's progress requires the work of a team vs. an individual. The team requires parents, teachers and providers to work together. Related services' goal is to assist students in benefiting from special education curriculum.

**What's new in Related Services:** The Essential Question is: How can related service optimally support all students in meeting their instruction goals? (IDEA) or Individuals with Disabilities Education Act passed in 1975 guarantees FAPE to children to prepare them for further education, employment & independent living. It also provides for Related Service to meet the unique learning needs of students demonstrating that the services provide education benefit to students.

### **Related Services**

1. Required to assist a child with a benefit from special education.
2. Based upon an evaluation that talks about the special need for service.
3. Are important. However, based upon a review of decades of the delivery of related services we recognize that each child with a disability may not require some or every related service to progress, but may be able to achieve similar results with alternative means of support. i.e. Adaptive Physical Education(APE), Get Ready to Learn (GRIT), Sport, Music Classroom/ paraprofessional. The need for related services should be discussed prior to and at an IEP meeting. Appropriate personnel should be included in the meeting.
4. Based on the instructional needs of a student, related services are to be considered.
5. Some services are easy to identify, others are not as clear. Do all students with a disability classification require a specific service? i.e. Basketball team where each player had PT on their IEP.
6. The focus of the (DESELL'S) is Education Reform. We who provide related service to students are integrated into the reform.
7. When a related service is selected and mandated as well, it is delivered to support instruction and must be reflected in all recommendations. If it is not, the service may not have impact or merit.

### **Special Education Reform-Roll Out**

On April 24, 2011 at the Roll-Out of the Special Education Reform, the Citywide District 75 Council found no aspect to the reform that addressed District 75 Program after reviewing the Special Education Reform. The council concluded that it would not co-present during the presentation of the Special Education Reform. The council members firmly agree with any reform that will benefit children with special needs. We thank you for including us and for the invitation to participate.

**Note:** See attached the Citywide District 75 Council response letter and the Special Education Reform Roll-Out.

### **Questions Raised During the Special Education Roll-Out Reform Presentation:**

- A. Regarding the "Fair Student Funding Proposed Weights" and the "Fair Student Funding Current Weights Graphs" (see attached) request for cumulative dollar amounts applied to the percentages?
- B. Do the numbers also apply to District 75?
- C. What impact will the funding structures have at the school level?
- D. Does this apply to existing programs for non-matriculating students?
- E. Within the Reform the DOE should include language if it applies to D75.
- F. The reform's headline should be changed to "Parent Information" as opposed to "Principal Information".

G. The presentation lacks specific details used to determine a successful Phase 1 of the Special Education Reform.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION REFORM FOR SEPTEMBER 2012**

Since 2005, the Department of Education (DOE) has elevated the four-year graduation for students with disabilities from 17.1 % to 31.0%, increasing the number of students with disabilities graduating with Regents diplomas during this time by 10.3 percentage points. This represents tremendous gains for many of our students. However, far too many of our students with disabilities have not realized similar success. Currently, our students with disabilities are graduating at only half the rate of their non-disabled peers, which is unacceptable. For far too long, educating students with disabilities in New York City has meant separating them from their non-disabled peers. Special education has been treated as a place, not a service in support of student instruction. Given everything we know about special education and the results, it is clear that this approach is not working for the vast majority of our students. Pursuant to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), students are entitled to a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment and, to the maximum extent, student with disabilities should be educated with children who are not. What constitutes a least restrictive environment will differ for individual children; some may continue to require settings outside of the general education classroom for all or part of the school day. We are not advocating for those settings to change. However, we are requiring schools to comply with IDEA and ensure that students with disabilities have access to the same classroom and curricula as their non-disabilities peers. The overall instructional goal of this reform is to improve long-term academic outcome for students with disabilities. There are three key ways: (1) To ensure access to the Common Core Standards through Universal Design Learning; (2) To develop high-quality Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) that are designed to meet students' individualized needs; and (3) To create flexible programs for students in support of their individualized needs. The recently updated New York State IEP, which was implemented in July 2011, prompts IEP teams to consider what instructional services students need in each subject area. This requires thoughtful consideration of students' needs and how those needs can be met in the least restrictive environment appropriate for each child. Using the full range of programs and services available through our continuum for services gives schools the ability to meet students' needs in part-time or full-time settings as appropriate, based on students' individual educational goals. The operational changes that will go into effect in September 2012 are designed to support these instruction goals while maintaining stability for our students. The changes in enrollment for students with disabilities will focus primarily on articulating grades for most of our schools. This means kindergarten, 6th grade, and 9th grade, as well as students who are registered over the counter. Schools will have the ability to meet the needs of their students, as determined by students' IEP and to create programs that meet students' needs. The programs and services offered may look different at different schools, based on the needs of the students in each school community. The process by which a school IEP team works with a student's family to identify the student's needs and then determine the best way to meet these needs is not changed. All regulations and procedural safeguards remain fully in place. Families are valued and integral members of the IEP teams and schools will work closely with families in order to ensure that the programs and services recommended on the IEP match the needs of the student.

**PHASE 1 HIGHLIGHT** ----- When the DOE began this work with the 260 schools that were involved in **Phase 1** of the reform in the fall of 2010, they focused on how to implement this reform in a way that was meaningful and maintained stability for schools. Educating students in more inclusive settings produces positive academic results. There is an immense amount of national research supporting the academic goals of the reform, and a few these students are highlighted.

### **BUDGET CUTS**

FY 12 Program to Eliminate the GAP (PEG). As a result of the current fiscal condition, there was a FY 12 Program to eliminate the (PEG) budget to District 75 in the amount of \$12,082,908. In as much as services provided by District 75, these schools are IEP (Individual Education Program) mandated, the reduction was not assessed to schools on a per capita basis.

### **The PEG reduction was as follows:**

- **District 75 C-First Coaches:** In FY 12, 2.00 FTEC- First Coach positions will be eliminated.
- **School Bases Coaches:** Beginning with FY 12, District funding for the position a 1.00 FTE School Bases Coach has been eliminated.
- **Bus Transportation Paraprofessional:** A three percent (3%) reduction to the initial allocation for Bus Transportation Paraprofessionals has been made to school allocations.
- **Project Arts:** A ten percent (10%) reduction to the initial allocation for project Art has been made to the school allocation.
- **Paraprofessional Replacement Service:** A reduction to the initial allocation to Paraprofessional Replacement service from 8 days per year to 6 days per year-has been made to school allocation.
- **Home Instruction Par Session:** A reduction to the Par session budget for Home Instruction has been made on current expenditures.
- **Reduction of Other Than Personal Service (OPT) Expenditure:** A reduction of three million dollars (3,000,000) of OPT expenditures will be made in FY 12.
- **School Aides:** To meet the FY 12 Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG) a reduction of the allocation equivalent to 1.00 FTE School aides is being applied to school.

**The Common Core Standards:** The Common Core Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects ("the Standards") are the culmination of an extended, broad-based effort to fulfill the change issued by the state to create the next generation of K-12 standards in order to help ensure that all students are college and career ready in literacy no later than the end of high school.

### **Council Top Priority for School Year 2011-2012:**

- One of the council's priorities for the school year 2011-2012 was to develop a working relationship with the Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) for the purpose of resolving busing complaints. The outcome of this relationship has been positive and results can be seen in the way that busing issues are currently handled. Issues that previously took days or weeks to resolve are now being addressed in a timely fashion, within one day and in some cases within hours.
- In conjunction with the District Office and The President's Council, the council has helped establish PTA's in schools in all five boroughs attending SLT'S/PTA'S and other PA organization.
- In September the council embraced the Chancellor's initiative to engage parents and encourage broader involvement in school activities and worked very closely with the superintendent in clearing up a lot of misinformation about cuts in related services.
- The Council has worked tirelessly to help spread the word about the fantastic work that is being done within District 75 both in the political arena and the entertainment field.
- Going forth, the council is looking forward to increasing its respectability and dedication. The council is also looking for a true partnership with the DOE by recognizing and respecting the effort and ability the members bring to the education community.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **Busing:**

- ✓ **OPT should continue to implement the recommendation and suggestions that was present during the council's September Calendar Meeting within the pamphlet we suggested to keep a clear line of communication open with the council.**
- ✓ **Release the Busing Booklet co-produced by the Citywide District 75 Council and OPT.**

## Medicaid Claim for Special Education Related Services:

- ✓ **The Distribution of Medicaid Claims for Special Education-Related Service: Understanding the Consent Form to Bill Medicaid by the DOE that was presented by the council during their Calendar Meeting 2012.**

## Related Services Reform:

- ✓ **Clearer communication about how Special Education Reform if at all will affect District 75.**

## Budget Cuts:

- ✓ **Make available data regarding the reduction of allocated funds to the FY12 programs to eliminate the GAP (PEG) affected the numbers of student programs.**

## Other:

### Resolutions:

Resolution# 23-Citywide District 75 Council-Teachers Evaluation Resolution- **Approved**

### Participated in:

The EPIC Parent Conference & Best Practice, May 19<sup>th</sup>

Samuel Stern Awards Memorial Foundation Awards Ceremony, May 23<sup>rd</sup>

### Council Meeting Dates:

June 21st, 2012 Calendar Meeting	Tweed
June 6th, 2012 Working Meeting	District Office
CCSE & CD75 Resource Fair	Brooklyn Borough Hall
May 16th, 2012 Calendar Meeting	Tweed
May 2nd, 2012 Working Meeting	District Office
April 18th, 2012 Calendar Meeting	Brooklyn Borough Hall
April 4th, 2012 Working Meeting	District Office
March 21st, 2012 Calendar Meeting	Tweed
March 7th, 2012 Working Meeting Agenda	District Office
February 15th, 2012 Calendar Meeting	723X@218X
February 1st, 2012 Working Meeting	District Office
January 18th, 2012 Public Forum Calendar Meeting	753K@Brooklyn School for Career Development
January 4th, 2012 Working Meeting Agenda	District Office

December 7th, 2011 Calendar and Working Meeting	721Q
November 16th, 2011 Calendar Meeting & Public Forum	P94M@267M
November 2nd, 2011 Working Meeting	Court Square
October 19th, 2011 Calendar Meeting: Public Forum	Tweed
October 5th, 2011 Working Meeting Agenda	Court Square
September 21st, 2011 Calendar Meeting	373R @ Petrides
September 7th, 2011 Working Meeting	Court Square
August 10th, 2011 Meeting	Court Square
2011 Annual Meeting	Court Square
July 13th, 2011 Calendar Meeting	Court Square
July 6th, 2011 Working Meeting	Court Square