

President
First Vice President
Second Vice President/ELL Rep
Recording Secretary
Treasurer/BBP Appointee

Steve Stowe
Dina Guirguis
Robert Aguilar
Alice Licato
Inga Smolyar



Council Members

Alan Aja - IEP Rep Vito LaBella
Mauricia Cadillo Simeon Stolzberg - BBP
Yi Fang Chen Appointee
Adele Doyle

Administrative Assistant: Natalia Mondesir

Community Education Council District 20 June Business Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, June 9, 2021

Meeting ID: <https://nycdoe.zoom.us/j/87646488050?pwd=YmRhd3UwU3ZERmEzd0VzNC9SbWZIUT09>

Meeting Start Time: 6:06 PM

Present: Steve Stowe, Adele Doyle, Vito LaBella, Mauricia Cadillo, Yi Fang Chen, Simeon Stolzberg, Inga Smolyar, Dina Guirguis,

Excused: Alan Aja, Robert Aguilar, Alice Licato

Guests: David Pretto, D20 Superintendent; Sylwia Jasinski, Family Support Coordinator; Dianne Gounardes, CSA Representative and Pre-K Director, Janine Faustner, President of the Presidents' Council

- I. **Meeting called to Order:** Steve Stowe, President
 - a. **Roll Call:** Steve Stowe

- II. **Old Business (00:06:58)**
 - a. Approval of May Business Meeting Minutes
 1. Minutes unanimously approved

- III. **New Business (00:09:30)**
 - a. Motion to approve the Superintendent Evaluation
 1. Steve Stowe- Yes
 2. Dina Guirguis- Yes*
 3. Robert Aguilar- Excused
 4. Alice Licato- Excused
 5. Inga Smolyar-Yes
 6. Alan Aja- Excused
 7. Mauricia Cadillo- Yes
 8. Yi Fang Chen- Yes
 9. Adele Doyle- Yes
 10. Vito LaBella- Yes
 11. Simeon Stolzberg- Yes
 - b. Motion passes with Yes-8, No- 0, Excused- 3
 1. *Dina Guirguis was not present for the roll call vote, but gave her vote before the meeting was adjourned (00:23:41)
 - c. Motion for Steve Stowe to meet with Superintendent Pretto to discuss the Superintendent Evaluation; Second- Vito Labella (00:11:40)
 1. Motion passes with All in Favor, No opposed
 - d. **Parent Survey (00:12:58)**
 1. Council member Adele Doyle asked for an update on the parent survey
 2. Parent Coordinators received the email on Monday, June 7; so far there are 90 responses to the survey
 3. Adele Doyle asked, considering the year-end burnout, if more parents would participate if the survey was distributed at the beginning of the year (00:14:42)
 4. Due to DOE regulations, the first five questions ask parents to self-disclose information (00:15:37)

5. The DOE extended the deadline for their survey, President Steve Stowe is considering doing the same for the CEC survey; (00:16:22)

IV. Open Meeting (00:16:48)

- a. Adele Doyle requested that Dianne Gounardes spoke on Pre-Kindergarten admissions
 1. Dianne Gounardes reported that principals are aware of the CEC survey (00:18:24); 3-K programs will be added to the Pre-K programs (00:20:18); 255 3-K seats available for 700 applicants (00:20:45)
 2. Janine Faustner announced that Friday, June 11 will be the last Presidents' Council meeting of 2020-2021; elections will be held at the meeting (00:22:26)

V. Adjourn (00:24:43)

- a. Motion to adjourn: Steve Stowe, Second: Adele Doyle
 1. All in favor
- b. Meeting adjourned at 6:31 pm

Submitted: Natalia Mondesir
June 25, 2021

President Steve Stowe
First Vice President Dina Guirguis
Second Vice President/ELL Rep Robert Aguilar
Recording Secretary Alice Licato
Treasurer/BBP Appointee Inga Smolyar



Council Members

Alan Aja - IEP Rep Vito LaBella
Mauricia Cadillo Simeon Stolzberg - BBP
Yi Fang Chen Appointee
Adele Doyle

Administrative Assistant: Natalia Mondesir

Community Education Council District 20 June Calendar Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, June 9, 2021

Meeting ID: <https://nycdoe.zoom.us/j/87646488050?pwd=YmRhd3UwU3ZERmEzd0VzNC9SbWZlUT09>

Meeting Start Time: 7:00 PM

Present: Steve Stowe, Adele Doyle, Vito LaBella, Mauricia Cadillo, Yi Fang Chen, Simeon Stolzberg, Inga Smolyar, Dina Guirguis, Alice Licato

Excused: Alan Aja, Robert Aguilar,

Guests: David Pretto, D20 Superintendent; Sylwia Jasinski, Family Support Coordinator; Dianne Gounardes, CSA Representative and Pre-K Director, Janine Faustner, President of the Presidents' Council; Kerri Durante, PS 971 Sustainability Coordinator;

- I. **Meeting called to Order:** Steve Stowe, President
 - a. **Roll Call:** Alice Licato
 - b. President Steve Stowe made a motion to have Dianne Gounardes report after the President's report (00:35:00)
 1. All in favor, No opposed
 - c. Steve Stowe made a motion for Janine Faustner to make an announcement after Dianne Gounardes's report (00:35:37)
 1. All in favor, No opposed
 - d. Vito LaBella requested permission to post links relating to the letter to Chancellor Porter (00:36:35)
 1. Recording Secretary Alice Licato questioned whether the links should be posted before the sustainability presentation, since people will read the article instead of watching the presentation (00:37:12)
 - e. The next CEC meeting will be on July 14th (00:38:37)
 1. The election results will be announced live at 9:00 am on June 10th (00:38:53)
- II. **Old Business (00:40:15)**
 - a. Approval of May Calendar Meeting Minutes
 1. The four excused members were not recorded in the results of the Resolution 15 votes (00:50:18); the formatting of the Resolution 14 votes is skewed
 2. Minutes unanimously approved with the proposed changes (00:51:26)
 - b. Approval of May Special meeting minutes (00:51:40)
 1. Minutes unanimously approved (00:52:10)
- III. **Sustainability Presentation (00:52:38)**
 - a. Kerry Durante, the sustainability Coordinator at PS 971, gave a presentation on what happens to our trash and how to incorporate sustainable practices into our lives
 1. She provided a link with some resources:
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1NotvKJT5ifA8Zpwk26GXMPxJUC-3_jFLOmDlisghclU/edit?usp=sharing
 - b. Questions from council members (01:30:54)

1. Steve Stowe asked for clarification about composting and recycling programs in schools (01:31:02)
2. Adele Doyle asked if there were three bins in every classroom and if she saw them being collected (01:34:05); if she has done audits to see what is being thrown out (01:35:19); Stated that it is sometimes difficult to walk the line of asking and telling the custodial staff to do more than what they are mandated to do (01:37:07)
3. Alice Licato mentioned that there was push back on the organics program when it started (01:40:12); mentioned that in other states, there are schools where there are policies against single-use plastics (01:41:07)

IV. Report of Superintendent (01:42:20)

- a. Superintendent Pretto gave a report of his goals and the next steps
 1. His observations have found that there is a need to reestablish structures to support district and school goal setting and progress monitoring through the use of data (01:44:36)
- b. Things put in place: iReady assessment, student and parent mini-charrettes, CEP clinics with the Director of State and Federal Policy Implementation (01:45:10)
 1. Held the student session of the Design Thinking Mini-charrette on June 8th to hear the students' and parents' perspective on how their experience of the pandemic can inform a powerful reopening in the fall; the parent session will be held June 10th (01:52:08)
- c. Needs: Special Education seats, Program access for special needs students, clear explanation of the impact of the removal of academic screens and introduction of a random lottery for middle and high school applications (01:46:00), availability of language programming in middle school (01:49:24)
 1. Superintendent Pretto explained the deferred acceptance algorithms used for student applications (01:47:16)
 2. Worked with middle and elementary school principals to examine current and future programming models at each school to ensure a rigorous and relevant curriculum, and enrichment opportunities at each school (01:48:47)
- d. Partnered with UFT and their positive learning collaborative training team through the teacher Center (01:49:57)
- e. Two principals were appointed: Georgia Mousouroulis of PS 939 and Donna Nastasi of MS 936 (01:50:58)
- f. Structures to be implemented (01:53:37)
 1. Parental access and ability to communicate information to the district
 2. Using the charrettes as a quarterly progress monitoring structure to engage students and families in discussions around how implemented structures are working (01:53:52)
 3. Coffee with the Superintendent for families will have a predictable time to raise their concerns to the superintendent and his team (01:54:07)
 4. Exploring the development of some targeted advisory student groups in the spirit of the charrettes, but on a smaller scale. (01:54:30)
 5. School-based equity committees in each school (01:55:00)
- g. A principals' conference will be held on Monday June 28 to celebrate and plan for next year, examine some of the data sources to support the process for going about goal setting And action plan developments in CPS (01:55:21)
- h. Questions (01:56:51)
 1. Steve Stowe asked for clarification on the lottery process (01:56:58); asked what are the superintendent's goals for the school equity teams (01:59:07)
 2. Adele Doyle asked if the number of seats each school sets aside for students with certain grades is publically accessible (02:02:09); asked about students wearing masks in school (02:04:52)

3. Alice Licato asked about Superintendent Pretto's vision for a district-wide Juneteenth celebration (02:07:12)
4. Vito LaBella asked Superintendent Pretto for his views on an article about the enrollment algorithm, which related to a letter he co-wrote with Steve Stowe (02:09:41)

V. Report of Council President (02:12:45)

- a. The SCA sent their preliminary update on the Capital Funding requests
- b. I.S. 223 Special Education Teacher Louis Bonini created an interactive map of District 20 schools that can be used for the CEC website (02:13:37)
- c. The parent survey was distributed to parent coordinators by Family Support Coordinator, Sylwia Jasinski (02:15:10)
 1. The deadline may be extended based on the number of responses
- d. Chancellor Meisha Porter held a town hall for Brooklyn (02:17:06)
 1. Topics discussed included health and safety (02:17:22); Deputy Chancellor Karin Goldmark's citywide group to evaluate programming models at schools (02:18:02); Student vaccines and the state offering weekly lottery drawings for vaccinated students to receive full scholarships to SUNY and CUNY schools (02:18:46); accelerated learning and priority standards per grade (02:19:24); Gifted and Talented programs (02:20:00); Schools will have mental health support with 75,000 teachers trained on trauma informed instruction and Wellness Ambassadors (02:20:55); a poll taken on spending priorities (02:22:16)
- e. District 20 Early Childhood Director Dianne Gounardes announced that 17 sections of 3-K with 97 classrooms will open in September (02:23:16)
 1. She requested that pre-k centers be included on the interactive map (02:25:40)
 2. Special education programs will be available for the pre-k students (02:26:15)
 3. Dual language programs in Mandarin, Arabic, and Spanish will also be available (02:26:24)
 4. More information can be found at www.district20prek.org or Dianne can be reached at dgounar@schools.nyc.gov
- f. Presidents' Council President Janine Faustner announced that the last Presidents' Council meeting of 2020-2021 is scheduled for Friday, June 11th (02:27:31)
 1. It is the election meeting for next year's executive board (02:27:42)
 2. All PTA elections must be held before June 30th or there will be an expedited election in the fall (02:27:52)
 3. If a board needs assistance, they can contact Janine Faustner, Vito LaBella, or Tamara Stern (02:28:02)

VI. Letter to Chancellor Porter Regarding Middle and High School Admissions (02:28:25)

- a. Vito LaBella introduced the letter he drafted with Steve Stowe as a response to the changed process for middle and high school admissions, including the lack of available metrics.
- b. A past audit of the lottery system found many irregularities. The report can be found here: <https://medium.com/algorithms-in-the-wild/decoding-the-nyc-school-admission-lottery-numbers-bae7148e337d>
- c. There are conflicting expiration dates for the waitlist which may lead to unfulfilled seats for programs that parents want their children in once school starts (02:32:14)
- d. Questions
 1. Alice Licato asked if the same algorithm was being used in 2013 when John Liu conducted the audit (02:35:25); asked if there is evidence that the lottery, waitlist, or selections will be affected by corruption (02:37:08)

2. Adele Doyle stated that since there are cases of parents not getting any of their choice schools, there needs to be a closer look at how the algorithm is applied (02:38:42); stated that there are metrics applied, we just don't know what they are (02:39:12); Suggested that the incoming council have someone from Enrollment attend their first meeting (02:39:39)
3. Steve Stowe stated that the first part of the letter addresses the lottery; It is a public service and parents want to know how it's run (02:41:36)

VII. Public Speaking (02:43:15)

- a. Natalia Guarin-Klein wanted to know about admissions for next year (02:44:16); stated that the desire for accelerated programs is viewed as racist, but it's how she and her siblings got out of poverty (02:44:50)
- b. Rona Merrill shared an article about the admissions process and how the algorithm was developed: <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/07/nyregion/how-game-theory-helped-improve-new-york-city-high-school-application-process.html> and stated that the DOE put out a video for incoming middle school parents that explains how the algorithm works, as well as the set asides and lotteries (02:45:54); requested that the DOE find out how many students got into selective programs (02:46:38); Stated that she is disappointed with the way CM LaBella joked about systemic racism issues in schools and suggested that the CEC make some discourse regulations that prohibit people, especially if they're sitting on the CEC to make light of these important issues (02:47:52); Commends CM LaBella and Stowe for challenging the corruption surrounding school admissions (02:48:45)
 1. CM LaBella responded that he does care about systemic racism, but believes there are different remedies to systemic racism, and wants to decrease the gap between all groups (02:49:49)

VIII. ECC Resolution on Class Size Reduction

- a. Recording Secretary Alice Licato introduced the resolution passed by the ECC at their May 17th meeting (02:53:15)
 1. There is a bill currently up in the Senate to decrease classroom sizes, to use the federal stimulus funds to mandate that the capital plan include funding to achieve lower class sizes
 2. At first, lower class sizes can be achieved by adding teachers to the classroom to lower the ratio, however the law requires building more schools to provide the extra seats in the long term (02:53:52)
 3. Things tend to have a momentum so if it is put into place now, there is better chance of still having it in five years, than if we wait and prioritize other things (02:54:27)
- b. **Comments from the CEC**
 1. Steve Stowe stated that he has an issue with the CEC being in the position of commenting on state legislation (02:56:29); The language in this bill amends an existing law and makes it tougher for the DOE to maintain financial flexibility in future years by requiring the DOE to hit an average class size and then maintain that level in perpetuity (02:57:00); In the future it will create higher fixed costs that the DOE is not able to manage, depending on conditions (02:57:49); There's a Brookings study that concludes that there are places where the implementation of smaller class sizes have had good effects and places that have had bad effects, but it is always expensive (02:58:40)
 2. Alice Licato responded that the Brookings Study states that the situations where class size reduction works is urban settings and overcrowded classes, both which apply to our district (02:59:24), questioned why the council should not be advocating and prioritizing for schools to be fully funded when the affected bill demanded that the schools be funded back in 2006,

which was never honored by New York State (03:00:35); Laws can always be changed or amended, based on who's in the legislature, so that should not prevent D20 from moving forward (03:01:22).

3. Adele Doyle stated that the topic of reduced class sizes has been discussed for many years and the DOE has not responded (03:02:51); the CEC has been requesting another high school be built in South Brooklyn but it's not included in the budget (03:03:49); She thinks there are other things going on (03:05:05)
 4. Yi Fang Chen agreed that there are other priorities, like expanding the G&T programs and reinstating the screens, and a quality education is more important than anything else (03:08:16)
 5. Mauricia Cadillo gave an example of children being waitlisted for all schools in District 20 as an example of there being other priorities (03:10:08); Instead of asking for smaller classes, the council should ask for more high schools (03:11:13); Stated that children had good grades in seventh grade, but the sixth grade scores were used for admissions (03:12:11)
 6. Vito LaBella stated that we have 100% of Fair Student Funding and we're getting back money because we have all of this largess from the Federal Government, but there is still a lack of space (03:13:12); asked how do you decrease class size when you have no space for more teachers or classrooms (03:13:35); Stated that he does not think it will be practical (03:13:51)
 7. Alice Licato responded by stating that the resolution has language that requests they lower the teacher to student ratio by adding more teachers in the room, but they need to include the funding to build the seats (03:14:10); stated that she believes this is trying to support and deliver what this district has been asking for and desperately needs (03:14:40)
 8. Steve Stowe stated that the language in it requires inclusion of the Capital Plan for School Construction (03:15:33)
 9. Alice Licato stated that there wasn't a plan for high schools in the most recent Capital Plan because there were no available properties and SCA has made it clear that they can't plan for a school without having tangible property to build on (03:15:55); Gifted and talented students already benefit from small class sizes, so when the council advocates for G&T programs, they are automatically advocating for small class size, except the rest of the D20 student population is not able to benefit (03:16:21)
 10. Steve Stowe stated that the provision in the old law where there would have to be a petition to the State Commissioner if the city doesn't meet its goals laid out in its class size reduction plan would be taken out and would open the city up to face a burden (03:17:04)
- c. Public Speaking (03:18:33)**
1. Rona Merrill stated that she supports the resolution because there are a lot of things that are needed and that can be done (03:18:42); She wrote the SCA about two available properties, but they did not act until the properties were purchased by someone else and sold to the SCA for double the price (03:18:52); District 75 still doesn't have a middle or high school and have to be bussed (03:20:20); Believes that once you ask for something there will be a way to get it and that would be very nice for children (03:21:59)
- d. Motion to vote on signing the ECC Resolution on Class Size Reduction: Alice Licato; Second- Vito LaBella (03:22:51)**
- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Steve Stowe- No | 7. Mauricia Cadillo- No |
| 2. Dina Guirguis- Yes | 8. Yi Fang Chen- No |
| 3. Robert Aguilar- Excused | 9. Adele Doyle- Abstain |
| 4. Alice Licato- Yes | 10. Vito LaBella- Abstain |
| 5. Inga Smolyar- Abstain | 11. Simeon Stolzberg- Absent |
| 6. Alan Aja- Excused | |
- e. Motion does not pass with Yes-2, No- 3, Abstain- 3, Absent- 3**

IX. Adjourn (00:54:51)

- a.** Motion to adjourn: Steve Stowe, Second: Adele Doyle
 - 1. All in favor
- b.** Meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm

Submitted: Natalia Mondesir
June 25, 2021