

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



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

Administrative Assistant: Natalia Mondesir

Community Education Council District 20 December Business Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Meeting ID: <https://nycdoe.zoom.us/j/82425637274?pwd=czhPcTZPN2pFeTBsalFrZiBMNG9qZz09>

Meeting Start Time: 6:02 PM

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

Guests: Dr. Joseph O'Brien, Interim Acting Superintendent; Sylwia Jasinski, Family Support Coordinator; William Chin, Family Leadership Coordinator; Steven Wieser, FACE Representative

- I. **Meeting called to Order:** Dina Guirguis, First Vice-President
 - a. **Roll Call:** Alice Licato
- II. **Old Business (not included in video)**
 - a. Approval of November Business Meeting Minutes
 - i. Minutes unanimously approved
- III. **Report of Council First Vice President (00:00:41)**
 - a. To conserve time, the council moved to the next agenda item
- IV. **Redistribution of District 20 Liaison Schools (00:01:00)**
 - a. Alice Licato suggested assigning schools based on location since the council cannot meet in person to randomly choose schools (0:01:06)
 - i. Would be easier for members to visit schools that are near each other (00:04:00)
 - ii. If we start a new policy now, it can carry on into the new year (00:04:49)
 - b. If the council chose not to redistribute the schools, Steve could take the schools of former member Katy Mullins (00:01:24)
 - i. Mr. Stowe will be the liaison for Katy Mullins's schools
 - c. Simeon Stolzberg asked if the schools were distributed by grade (e.x. elementary vs. middle school)
 - i. They were randomly assigned by drawing schools from a container
 - d. Mr. Stolzberg suggested randomly assigning schools by grade level (00:03:13)
 - e. Steve Stowe asked if distributing schools randomly and then exchanging them with other members violates any regulations (00:06:13)
 - f. In the interest of time, further discussion on redistributing will be tabled to the next meeting (00:07:15)
 - g. Alice Licato uploaded the liaison letter that she is working on to the Google Drive (00:07:53)
 - i. Letters are emailed to the Principals, Assistant Principals, and Parent Coordinators from the CEC20 email (00:08:28)
 - ii. The A.A. will work with Janine Faustner, Presidents' Council President, to get email addresses of the PTA presidents (00:09:08)
 - iii. Can then reach out to the schools and request that their liaisons be invited to the SLT meetings (00:09:30)
 - iv. In addition to re-establishing connections with the school, it asks that they submit their Capital Plan requests (00:11:03)

- h. Alice Licato made a motion that the schools liaised by former council member Katy Mullins be distributed to Steve Stowe (00:13:15)
 - i. Seconded- Inga Smolyar

V. New Business (00:14:00)

- a. Discussion of the 2020-2021 Capital Plan Projects
 - i. The deadline for the requests was not given yet, but it is usually early January (00:15:03)
 - ii. Nothing has been sent to schools yet- no letter was found in the CEC sent emails folder, just reminders to submit their requests (00:14:45)
 - iii. Schools are a bit confused as to what repairs would be granted by SCA (00:17:00)
 - 1. Many schools request important bathroom upgrades, but are denied
- b. Discussion of the final responses for the 2019-2020 Capital Plan Requests (00:17:15)
 - i. Bathroom upgrades are “under review” but other requests (such as playgrounds) are “unable to be prioritized”
 - 1. Bathrooms usually fall under another construction department (School Facilities), not the SCA
 - ii. Capital Plan is “under review for part” of two requests for new laptops (00:18:35)
 - 1. Can be purchased through Reso-A funding from city council (00:18:50)
 - iii. Requests seem to not get positive responses and there is not much advice to give to schools about what they can request (00:19:20)
 - 1. We can reach out to the SCA to find out what schools should be asking for that will be prioritized (00:19:45)
 - 2. Create a list of questions to ask the SCA at the January meeting (00:20:11)
 - iv. Discussed last year that children are not getting enough physical exercise, music, and arts (00:23:42)
 - 1. With the increasing need for technology and proper hygiene, they might be prioritizing the bathrooms and electrical upgrades that were not prioritized before (00:24:49)
 - v. Reach out to schools whose projects are under review to find out which departments are handling their projects (00:26:27, 00:30:25)
 - 1. How the process went
 - 2. Did anyone follow up
 - 3. What department will be handling their projects
- c. Alice Licato suggested holding liaison meetings with principals (00:33:27)
 - i. Break out rooms for liaison schools (00:33:53)
 - ii. Possibly held in February (00:34:02)
 - iii. Also have one for PTA presidents (00:34:15)
- d. Inga Smolyar shared that CEC 21 is working with their schools to highlight students (00:38:35)
 - i. We could possibly coordinate an event (00:39:18)
 - ii. Inga will reach out to CEC 21 to get more information on how they coordinated it (00:40:30)
 - iii. Speak to Dr. O'Brien to see if there were any virtual events where we can advertise (00:40:41)
 - 1. Last year's Virtual STEAM Expo can be used as a model to hold other events (00:44:08)
 - iv. Possibly hold it in May to supplement the annual Arts Festival that had been cancelled last year (00:40:53)
- e. Alice Licato suggested looking at the budget and figuring out how to spend the money (00:49:02)
 - i. The DOE was approving purchases that would normally be declined (00:49:30)
 - ii. The deadline for spending is in March and the council may lose an opportunity to help families in the community (00:49:51)

- iii. Other CECs are organizing food drives (00:50:35)
- iv. District 15 is trying to get hot spots (00:51:10)
 - v. Possibly purchase laptops for each member (00:51:55)
- vi. The DOE is reimbursing up to \$75 for internet, but how do you calculate an amount to be reimbursed? (00:52:27)
- vii. Create a wish list for how the council would like to use the money. The AA will reach out to FACE to see if requests will be approved or denied (00:56:28)

VI. Adjourn

- a. Meeting adjourned at 7:02 pm

DRAFT

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Community Education Council District 20 December Calendar Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Meeting ID: <https://nycdoe.zoom.us/j/82425637274?pwd=czhPcTZPN2pFeTBsalFrZiBMNG9qZz09>

Meeting Start Time: 7:02 PM

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

Guests: Dr. Joseph O'Brien, Interim Acting Superintendent; Sylwia Jasinski, Family Support Coordinator; William Chin, Family Leadership Coordinator; Steven Wieser, FACE Representative

- I. **Meeting called to Order (00:57:28):** Dina Guirguis, First Vice-President
Roll Call (00:57:45): Alice Licato
- II. **Old Business (00:59:20)**
 - a. Approval of November Calendar meeting Minutes
 - i. Simeon Stolzberg asked for clarification on Posting the meetings and clarification as to a parent who spoke at the November Meeting (01:00:00)
 - b. Motion to approve- Simeon Stolzberg; Seconded- Alice Licato (01:00:25)
 - i. Minutes unanimously approved
- III. **New Business**
 - a. Officer Election- Council President (01:03:00)
 - i. Simeon Stolzberg nominated by Alice Licato; Simeon accepts (01:03:18)
 - ii. Steve Stowe nominated by Adele Doyle; Steve accepts (01:03:23)
 - iii. Dina Guirguis nominated by Vito LaBella; Dina does not accept (01:04:10)
 - iv. Candidates were given two minutes to make a statement (01:04:30)
 - v. Adele Doyle motioned for an Executive session to discuss the candidates (01:09:00)
 1. Dina Guirguis- No
 2. Robert Aguilar- No
 3. Alice Licato- No
 4. Inga Smolyar- No
 5. Alan Aja- No
 6. Mauricia Cadillo- No
 7. Yi Fang Chen- Abstain
 8. Adele Doyle- Yes
 9. Vito LaBella- No
 10. Simeon Stolzberg- Yes
 11. Steve Stowe: Yes
 - vi. Roll call vote (01:11:50):
 1. Dina Guirguis- Simeon Stolzberg
 2. Robert Aguilar- Simeon Stolzberg
 3. Alice Licato- Simeon Stolzberg
 4. Inga Smolyar- Steve Stowe

5. Alan Aja- Simeon Stolzberg
 6. Mauricia Cadillo- Steve Stowe
 7. Yi Fang Chen- Steve Stowe
 8. Adele Doyle- Steve Stowe
 9. Vito LaBella- Steve Stowe
 10. Simeon Stolzberg- Simeon Stolzberg
 11. Steve Stowe- Steve Stowe
- vii. Steve Stowe is elected as president with 6 votes (6 votes, or quorum, is needed)
 - viii. Dina Guirguis will continue to chair the remainder of the December meeting. Steve Stowe will assume the Presidential duties tomorrow (12/10) and chair the January meeting (01:14:35)

IV. Report of Community Interim Acting Superintendent (01:15:10)

- a. Update on schools closing and reopening (01:15:30):
 - i. Grades K-5 reopened on Monday, December 7, 2020
- b. Devices (01:16:14):
 - i. DOE has delivered 11,532 devices to District 20 families
 - ii. An additional 2,607 devices remain to be delivered
 - iii. Working with Executive Superintendent Barbara Freeman to deliver the remaining devices
- c. Reached out to Deputy Chancellor Adrienne Austin to ask for help with what the district can do to help families (01:17:08)
- d. Jeff Thamkittikasem, Director of the NYC Mayor's Office of Operations (01:17:30)
 - i. Leads Covid testing for the city, explores expanding capacity for hospitals and schools to expand testing
 - ii. Worked with people within the administration, several partners across the city, state representatives to figure out what was possible to create a safe environment to open schools (01:19:03); Also took examples from other countries (01:19:30)
 - iii. Developed a prevalence survey testing program to identify and test a percentage of staff and students in order to understand prevalence throughout the year (01:19:41)
 1. Would identify what the prevalence is for the entire school system
 2. Look at individual schools by district, borough, etc.
 - iv. Safety protocols have kept schools safe with low positivity rates (01:20:30)
 1. Approximately .27% positivity rate when schools closed in November
 2. About the same percentage when schools reopened
 - v. Moved from monthly testing to weekly to account for the fact that numbers were rising (01:21:10)
 1. Have strict protocols in place for when positivity rate rise
 2. Can identify if cases are related and isolate the pod
 - vi. Have three testing providers with an extensive history with testing (01:22:15)
 1. BioReference- helped with Health and Hospitals program, have been doing testing for the NBA Bubble and NFL
 2. Somas Community Partners- Community provider in North Manhattan and Brooklyn with a focus in pediatric doctors and nurses
 3. Fulgent- work in advancing technology around testing, advanced the first at-home testing kit
 - vii. Each provider is assigned a set number of schools (01:23:22)
 1. Usually overbook weekly schedules on Mondays and Thursdays because of increased demand for testing
 2. Stay to test more than the 20% of students and staff
 - viii. Test results are usually ready in 24-48 hours (01:24:26)
 1. 86% of test results are ready in 24 hours

2. Less than 2% fall out of the window for inconclusive data and rerunning the test
 3. Information is stored for five days in case there are questions
 4. Proactively contact families if positive cases are found
 5. Providers can be contacted directly for test results, but families are generally not contacted for negative results
- ix. Program is running for Kindergarten through elementary school (01:25:57)
1. Testing students in grades 1-5
 2. Testing staff in K-5th grades
 3. Testing D75 students starting Monday, December 14, 2020
- e. Questions from council members (01:29:22)
- i. Adele Doyle asked about the accuracy of claiming that parental consent is optional when students will not be allowed in school without being tested and why parents are not allowed to be with their children during testing at school (01:29:33)
 - ii. Vito LaBella asked that the mayor be notified about parental concerns about being present while their children being tested (01:36:35)
 - iii. Yi Fang asked about extending the deadline for immunization records (01:39:35)
 - iv. Alan Aja asked if the low positivity rate is due to not testing enough (01:42:10)
 - v. Steve Stowe asked how/if the city's testing policy with regards to red and orange zones overlaps with the testing policy of the state (01:44:20)
 - vi. In the chat box, a principal asked about getting translated versions of the testing letter to send home to parents (01:47:00)
 - vii. Dina Guirguis asked if the Mayor's Office of Operations had any ideas that would permit parents to be virtually present when their children are being tested ((01:48:10)

V. **Principal Speaking Session (01:52:20)**

- a. William Kirk, PS/IS 229: Discussed having a Regional Enrichment Center at the school, no positive test results, the number of days of in-person and remote learning, making remote learning more interactive (01:53:03)
- b. Yuqing Hong, PS 310: Have not had any positive results, parents and staff volunteer to be tested, monthly parent workshops focusing on how to support the children with remote learning, afterschool program, improving online engagement (02:03:22)
- c. Margaret Russo, PS 160: Has school staff translate testing letters because she only gets the reply that translations are "forthcoming," has a high attendance rate, remote learning has been a wonderful experience (02:08:50)
 - i. Adele Doyle requested that CEC members be invited to SLT meetings on a standing basis (02:12:09)
 - ii. Alice Licato shared her experience with her daughter's teacher refusing to use the chat feature during remote learning (02:13:43)

VI. **Comments from PTA/PTO Presidents (02:15:55)**

- a. Diana Brogan, PS 185 PTA President: Disappointed that Jeff Thamkittikasem is no longer in the meeting; says that parents are being coerced with regards to testing their children; believes that the justifications for the testing mandate are weak because no one has permission to touch a child without a parent present (02:18:09)
- b. Sophia Lambrakis, PTA Member: Felt unsure about sending her children to school; taking away the rights of parents is the wrong way to approach testing; not opposed to testing but wants to be present (02:22:50)
- c. Michael Loeb, IS 62 President: asked Dr. O'Brien what is the plan to get devices to the 2,000 students who still does not have one (02:25:40)

VII. **Public speaking (02:27:33)**

- a. Freya Magnus: Biggest issue with the city not testing everyone before entering the school; will not sign away her rights over her child's body; the guest speaker seems to be making the statistics work in his favor (02:28:06)
- b. Ellen Brown: Disappointing that Jeff Thamkittikasem is not present; agrees with Diana, Sophia, and Freya (02:32:00)
- c. Alexis Gillen: Concerned with how the concerns of the parents will get to the Mayor; is 20% of a school's population really being tested when there are staff that do not have to comply; if testing is the answer, why has a date not been set to reopen high schools (02:32:53)
- d. Vito LaBella read a statement from Julia Hernandez, a district parent (02:34:40):

"...On the matter of this mandatory testing, I believe that parents should have the right to take their kids to their private doctors. The ideas of tents outside so parents are present is great, but it comes with the issue of a parent who cannot take off last minute because a child will be chosen at random for the day of testing. If children with disabilities can have the option to take testing at their doctors, why can't all students have that option? As a parent, many of our children may not have a diagnosed ability, but our children may not feel comfortable with a stranger taking the test. Students with no disabilities may also become traumatized or have sensitivity issues and yet they are not given this option. Many things with testing needs to be viewed on the aspect of children, not divide the normal children and the disabled children. I think that the view of the higher ups is that 3-K and Pre-K and Kindergarten students don't get tested because they can be traumatized, then this should also be viewed for all testing, little ones as well. I believe freedom of choice, not mandatory decisions for our kids, with the notion of 'or else.' Thank you for allowing parents to have this platform and voice."

V. **Resolution 9 on COVID Testing in Schools**

- a. Motion to switch the order of the discussions on the resolutions: Alice Licato; seconded: Vito LaBella (02:38:30)
- b. Changes suggested by Simeon Stolzberg (02:39:50):
 - i. Change the wording of the introduction statement
 - ii. Remove the fourteenth whereas
 - iii. Change the wording of the introduction statement of the resolves
- c. Changes suggested by Inga Smolyar (02:43:08)
 - i. Include "NYC" before "schools" in the introduction statement
 - ii. Include "NYC" before DOE in the fifth whereas
 - iii. Change the grades from "3K-5" to "1-5" in the eleventh whereas
 - iv. Remove the last sentence of the eleventh whereas
 - v. Change the order of the thirteenth through the sixteenth whereas
 - vi. Change the order of the resolves
- d. Adele Doyle asked if there is an If/Than solution in the whereas about the coercive value of the consent form and if it is problematic (02:48:50)
 - i. Alice Licato made a follow-up statement: while not feasible for everyone, there is the option to not send children to school, the only people being deprived of an education are the children who do not have devices (02:49:39)
 - ii. Adele restated the parents' perspective, that there are parents who do not have a choice because they have other obligations (02:50:37)
 - iii. Alice suggested that elected officials also be contacted about parental concerns, people do not have a choice because the leaders are not giving them a choice, need to advocate for resources from the leaders, people should not have to choose between sending their children to potentially dangerous school buildings and have a test that they do not want to consent to (02:51:13)

- iv. The whereas in question was removed prior to the meeting, but Adele would like it added to the resolution (02:52:28)
- v. Alan Aja would not support that in the resolution; the idea that parents have a choice is constrained, School staff has a right to protect themselves, sending parents to testing sites compromises their health because the patients there are more likely to show symptoms (02:53:56)
- vi. Adele is asking for language about coercion, acknowledging that parents are not objecting to having the tests done but want to be present (02:56:50)
- vii. Roll-call vote on the changes proposed by Inga Smolyar (02:59:50):
 - i. Dina Guirguis: Yes
 - ii. Robert Aguilar: No
 - iii. Alice Licato: Yes
 - iv. Inga Smolyar: Yes
 - v. Alan Aja: No
 - vi. Mauricia Cadillo: Yes
 - vii. Yi Fang Chen: Yes
 - viii. Adele Doyle: Yes
 - ix. Vito LaBella: Yes
 - x. Simeon Stolzberg: Yes
 - xi. Steve Stowe: Yes
- viii. Resolution 9 on Covid Testing in Schools passes with 9 Yes votes to 2 No votes

VI. Resolution 8 on Gifted and Talented and Admissions Criteria (03:04:58)

- a. Changes proposed by Simeon Stolzberg (03:10:00):
 - i. Change "September 2021" to "September 2020" in the second whereas (03:10:17)
 - ii. Remove the tenth whereas (03:11:41, 03:16:57)
 - iii. Remove the eleventh whereas (03:16:48)
 - iv. Remove the thirteenth whereas (03:17:11)
 - v. Add If/Then statements to the resolves (03:17:28)
- b. Vito LaBella stated that the proposed changes would change the intention of the resolution set by the co-sponsors (03:17:50)
- c. Dina Guirguis suggested voting on the resolution as it is and then make revisions to the document (03:18:50)
- d. Changes proposed by Alice Licato (03:21:25):
 - i. Removing the tenth and eleventh whereas statements or change the wording of the tenth whereas
- e. Motion to amend the resolution to the proposed changes to the whereas statements: Inga Smolyar; Seconded: Adele Doyle (03:23:29)
 - i. No opposed
- f. Changes to the resolves proposed by Simeon Stolzberg (03:24:06)
 - i. Combine the first two resolves to one statement (03:25:41)
 - ii. Clarify the seventh resolve on test scores as metrics for admission (03:26:15)
 - iii. Remove the last sentence of the seventh resolve that discusses waiving the selection criteria (03:26:27)
- g. Motion to amend the resolution to the proposed changes to the resolves: Dina Guirguis; Seconded: Vito LaBella (03:29:03)
 - i. No opposed
- h. Motion to vote on the amendments: Dina Guirguis; Seconded: Inga Smolyar (03:29:23)
 - i. No opposed
- i. Change to the title (03:29:42):
 - i. Alice Licato nominates Simeon Stolzberg to create a new title (03:30:50)
 - i. Middle and High School Admissions Policy

- ii. Motion to change the title of the resolution to “Middle and High School Admissions Policy for SY 2021-2022”: Alice Licato, Seconded: Dina Guirguis (03:32:19)
 - i. No opposed
- j. Motion to vote on all the proposed changes to the resolution: Dina Guirguis; Seconded: Alice Licato (03:33:17)
 - i. No opposed
- k. Roll-call vote on the resolution with all the proposed changes (03:33:33):
 - i. Dina Guirguis: Yes
 - ii. Robert Aguilar: No
 - iii. Alice Licato: Yes
 - iv. Inga Smolyar: Yes
 - v. Alan Aja: No
 - vi. Mauricia Cadillo: Yes
 - vii. Yi Fang Chen: Yes
 - viii. Adele Doyle: Yes
 - ix. Vito LaBella: Yes
 - x. Simeon Stolzberg: Yes
 - xi. Steve Stowe: Yes
- l. Resolution 8 on Middle and High School Admissions Policy for SY 2021-2022 passes with 9 Yes votes to 2 No votes

VII. Announcements (03:40:28)

- a. The next meeting is on January 13th, 6 pm for the Business Meeting and 7pm for the Calendar Meeting
 - i. Steve Stowe will be facilitating the meeting as the new CEC 20 President (03:40:36)
- b. There will be a resolution to amend at the next meeting: Resolution 7 Internet for All (03:40:44)

VIII. Adjournment:

- a. Motion to adjourn: Dina Guirguis, Seconded: Inga Smolyar
- b. Adjourned at 9:47 PM

Submitted: Natalia Mondesir
December 30, 2020