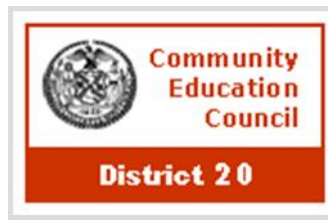


President Steve Stowe  
First Vice President Jennifer Hu  
Second Vice President/IEP Rep Elizabeth Chan  
Recording Secretary Vito LaBella  
Treasurer/BBP Appointee Marie Brugueras



Council Members  
Ghada Amin Maya Rozenblat-ELL REP  
Jona Isufi Joyce Xie  
Li Ping Jiang Kevin Zhao-BBP Appointee

Administrative Assistant: Natalia Mondesir

## Community Education Council District 20

### February Business Meeting

**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022

**Meeting ID:** <https://nycdoe.zoom.us/j/84131031261?pwd=MVRtQmVSOHNITWxLT09RRnpMUjFnQT09>

**Meeting Start Time:** 6:00 pm

**Present:** Steve Stowe, Vito LaBella, Marie Brugueras, Li Ping Jiang, Jennifer Hu, Maya Rozenblat, Kevin Zhao, Ghada Amin; Jona Isufi; Joyce Xie

**Absent:** Elizabeth Chan

- I. **Meeting Called to Order:** Steve Stowe, President
  - a. **Roll Call:** Vito LaBella, Recording Secretary
  
- II. **Old Business**
  - a. Approval of January Business Meeting Minutes
    - i. Minutes unanimously approved
  
- III. **Open Discussion**
  - a. President Steve Stowe discussed holding a joint information session with CEC2 and CCHS
    - i. Organized by CEC 2 for Tuesday, February 15, 2022 at 7 pm
    - ii. Open to all parents in New York City
    - iii. To help parents understand the application process
    - iv. Comments
      1. Kevin Zhao asked who was hosting the meeting, and if there would be interpretation
      2. Maya Rozenblat stated that this would help the parents who are confused and stressed at the process
  - b. Jennifer Hu and Steve Stowe discussed the growing list of projects for the council to do
    - i. Jennifer Hu suggested having a group discussion to sort priorities and create committees to work on them
    - ii. Steve Stowe clarified "committee" as related to the CEC
    - iii. The list is not formal; a collection of ideas relevant to needs in the district
      1. Topics include ELL Programs, the need for D75 seats, culturally responsive education, improving the CEC website, liaison outreach, DOE relations to track the requests made to the DOE, and mayoral control
      2. Several resource pages have been added to the website, including how to get a NYC Schools Account (NYCSA)
      3. Kevin Zhao asked for clarification on the liaison outreach

4. Marie Brugueras suggested holding a special meeting to discuss the projects
  5. Vito LaBella stated that Governor Hochul is planning to renew mayoral control over the schools for another four years, possibly without input from the CECs
- c. Steve Stowe discussed the D20 school map
    - i. The map has been updated with the current capacities
      1. Red schools are severely overcrowded (150% capacity and above)
      2. Orange schools very overcrowded (125% - 150% capacity)
      3. Yellow schools are above 100% Capacity (100% - 125% capacity)
      4. Green schools are below capacity (approximately 75-100% capacity)
    - ii. Only one school is over 150% capacity: P.S. 310
  - d. Marie Brugueras stated that the CEC should push for a legislative event, especially since meeting in person will soon be allowed
    - i. May be able to hold it at P.S. 127 McKinley Park
  - e. Maya Rozenblat discussed local and national competitions where participation is usually limited to specialized high schools and private schools
    - i. These schools have more funds and more interest from parents and school administration
    - ii. Would like to brainstorm how to encourage students who do not attend G&T schools to participate
    - iii. May need to also need to find additional resources to support the students who are having difficulties with the SHSAT
    - iv. Marie Brugueras asked if the competitions started in middle or high school

#### **IV. Adjourn**

- a. Motion to adjourn-Steve Stowe, Second: Jennifer Hu
  - i. All in favor
- b. Meeting adjourned at 6:48 pm

Submitted: Natalia Mondesir  
Date: February 15, 2022

President Steve Stowe  
First Vice President Jennifer Hu  
Second Vice President/IEP Rep Elizabeth Chan  
Recording Secretary Vito LaBella  
Treasurer/ BBP Appointee Marie Brugueras



Council Members  
Ghada Amin Maya Rozenblat-ELL REP  
Jona Isufi Joyce Xie  
Li Ping Jiang Kevin Zhao-BBP Appointee

Administrative Assistant: Natalia Mondesir

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## Community Education Council District 20

### February Calendar Meeting

**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022

**Meeting ID:** <https://nycdoe.zoom.us/j/84131031261?pwd=MVRtQmVSOHNITWxLT09RRnpMUjFnQT09>

**Meeting Start Time:** 7:01 pm

**Present:** Steve Stowe, Vito LaBella, Kevin Zhao, Maya Rozenblat, Li Ping Jiang, Jennifer Hu, Ghada Amin, Joyce Xie, Jona Isufi

**Excused:** Elizabeth Chan,

**Guests:** David Pretto, D20 Superintendent; William Chin, D20 Family Leadership Coordinator; Donald DeRosa, from the Office of New York City Comptroller Brad Lander; Alexa Alvilés, NYC Council member; Jenny Zhang, Chief of Staff for Assembly Member Marcella Mitaynes; Robert Ciulla, IS 201 Principal; Donna Nastasi, MS 936 Principal; Kathryn Rubin, MS 936 Theater Teacher; Dino Deascentiis, MS 936 Visual Arts Teacher; Josette Slivinski, MS 936 Dancing Teacher; David Fisher, MS 936 Music Teacher; Ellen Izzo, PS 503 Art Teacher;

**I. Meeting Called to Order:** Steve Stowe, President

- a. Roll Call: Vito LaBella, Recording Secretary
- b. Steve Stowe made a motion for council member Maya Rozenblat to give her ELL update before the minutes, Seconded-Vito LaBella
  - i. All in Favor

**II. ELL Update**

- a. Council member Maya Rozenblat introduced herself and shared the work that she has been doing with regards to the ELL programs in the district
  - i. The goal is to provide knowledge so parents can make informed decisions
  - ii. The process is complicated and parents, especially those who do not speak English, may misunderstand the process and may feel that there is a stigma around children joining the ELL programs
  - iii. Has been reaching out to the Division of Multilingual Learners who is working on new online resources for ELL parents; is planning to meet with the Citywide Council for English Language Learners (CELL)
  - iv. If parents have questions, they can start with their child's school as each school should provide services and have a designated Bilingual Education Coordinator
  - v. If the school is unable to help, she can be reached at [cec20mayar@gmail.com](mailto:cec20mayar@gmail.com)

**III. Old Business**

- a. Approval of January Calendar Meeting Minutes
  - i. Minutes unanimously approved

#### **IV. Report of Superintendent**

- a.** Dr. Pretto acknowledged celebrations and events happening this month: Lunar New Year, Black History month, Respect for All week, midwinter recess, and last month's Holocaust Remembrance Day
- b.** Health and Safety update: 550 cases as of February 7<sup>th</sup>, 0 closures due to Covid 19, Mask mandate continues to remain in effect
  - i.** Changes to isolation period:
    - 1.** K-12: 5 days with a positive test result, can return to school on day 6 with no symptoms or fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication
    - 2.** Children returning from isolation must wear a well-fitting mask on days 6-10
    - 3.** Children exposed to COVID, but are fully vaccinated and show no symptoms can continue to attend school
    - 4.** Children exposed to COVID, but are not fully vaccinated must quarantine for 5 days
    - 5.** Pre-K and under who are exposed must isolate for 10 days with a positive Covid test
    - 6.** Pre-K and under who are exposed, but have a negative Covid test must isolate for 5 days if they are symptom free and able to wear a well-fitting mask until day 10
- c.** Results of last year's school survey have been released
  - i.** Student responses only include sixth grade and higher
  - ii.** The 2021-2022 survey opens February 14<sup>th</sup> and ends March 25<sup>th</sup>
- d.** District 20 school renaming proposal
  - i.** Proposed at the SLT meeting that IS 201 The Dyker Heights be changed to The Madeleine Brennan School
  - ii.** IS 201 Principal, Robert Ciulla, gave a presentation on Madeleine Brennan's career at IS 201
  - iii.** Steve Stowe made a motion to vote on renaming IS 201, Second: Vito LaBella
    - 1.** Steve Stowe- Yes
    - 2.** Jennifer Hu- Yes
    - 3.** Elizabeth Chan- Excused
    - 4.** Vito LaBella- Yes
    - 5.** Marie Brugueras- Yes
    - 6.** Ghada Amin- Yes
    - 7.** Jona Isufi- Yes
    - 8.** Li Ping Jiang- Yes
    - 9.** Maya Rozenblat- Yes
    - 10.** Joyce Xie- Yes
    - 11.** Kevin Zhao- Yes
  - iv.** Motion passes with 10 Yes; and 1 Excused
- e.** Admissions update
  - i.** Middle and high school applications are open until March 1<sup>st</sup>
    - 1.** Programs using audition methods require virtual auditions, which can be found on the audition page on the website
    - 2.** Some screened programs may have additional requirements such as an essay or interview
    - 3.** New Multiples priority allow parents to submit identical high school applications for children of the same age (i.e. twins) so they receive offers to the same program

- ii. 3-K applications are open until March 18<sup>th</sup>, Pre-K applications are open until April 14<sup>th</sup>
  - 1. Families can apply online with MySchools, by phone at 718-935-2009, or in person at a Family Welcome Center
- iii. MS 936 is designated as an audition school
  - 1. Principal Donna Nastasi, Theater Teacher Kathryn Rubin, Visual Arts Teacher, Dino Deascentiis, Dancing Teacher Josette Slivinski, and Music Teacher David Fisher spoke about the audition process and their excitement at having students who are passionate about the arts
- iv. Questions from the council:
  - 1. Vito LaBella asked if there was a way to have some kind of scaffolding in place to assist if a fifth grade student needs help with their audition
  - 2. Kevin Zhao asked if there is any information on the virtual auditions, for example, if would they be held via Zoom
  - 3. Steve Stowe asked what happens if the school does not receive enough auditions to fill the entering class of 150 students

## V. Report of Council President

- a. Steve Stowe gave elected officials a chance to speak
  - i. Council member Alexa Alvilés spoke on MS936 being the first middle school built in 20 years, that it was not meant to be a screened school, and there was not meaningful engagement in the decision to hold auditions
    - 1. Contact information: [district38@councilnyc.gov](mailto:district38@councilnyc.gov) or call 718-438-9012
- b. CEC 20 will participate in a joint middle and high school admissions information session with CEC 2 and CCHS on Tuesday, February 15, at 7 pm
- c. The DOE will be moving all student records online so parents should sign up for a NYC Schools Account (NYCSA)
  - i. There is a page on the CEC website for assistance with setting up an account
- d. One resolution supports MS 936 auditioning incoming sixth graders and fulfilling their original mission
  - i. Proposed that the CEC work with the District Office and Office of District Planning (ODP) to create a data driven analysis of middle school capacity and enrollment needs

## VI. Public Speaking

- a. Nina Demos, PS 503 Principal, stated that she believes there is a way to ensure the integrity of the mission and vision of MS 936 while ensuring that underserved populations are not excluded from the admissions process; asked for the instatement of algorithms to add bonus points and set aside seats based on eligibility for free or reduced lunch
- b. Jenny Zhang, Chief of Staff for Assembly Member Marcella Mitaynes, stated that their office is focused on ensuring that there are fewer barriers and screening policies so that everyone can have access to the schools, there may be immigrant parents without access to technology and timely information
- c. Natalia Guarin-Klein is concerned with her fifth grader being excluded from the sibling priority because her older child is in the seventh grade; it would be unfair the change admissions for MS 936 as students have been practicing

- d. Ana Alzugaray stated that COVID has restricted the ability for students to put their best foot forward and the stress that the fifth graders will experience needs to be looked at
- e. Liz Regan (statement from PS 503 Social Worker Maria Garcia) stated that she is concerned that the change in admissions policy for MS 936 was made without the community stakeholders and requests priority for students in the 11220 zip code
- f. Noel Garcia is opposed to the change in the MS 936 admissions and we should talk about the vision for the community as well as the school
- g. Anluo Chen is frustrated that PS 506 has no Chinese staff members to help their Chinese speaking parents
- h. Ellen Izzo objects to the admissions criteria and is concerned that a premier art school would hold a narrow view of what art is
- i. Joey Zhang stated that kids are talented in different ways and questions why the auditions would be taken away from Sunset Park when there are other schools that hold auditions, immigrant parents can apply, just like other parents
- j. Yifang Chen stated that students from any race or income can be talented and opening a seat to talented students does not discriminate against others, an art school is long overdue in the district
- k. Jacquelin Guitarrero has heard that parents feel their children are not getting the opportunities they should be, auditions are taking away opportunities from kids who have not discovered their talent, feels that no one is listening to how the parents feel about the auditions
- l. Lucas Healy (D75 Student) stated that the change in policy sounds like a way to keep students out, all kids have talent but may not know what they are yet
- m. Mx. Tea (speaking for an MS 936 student) stated that it is unfair that other students in Sunset Park may not get the same opportunity to discover hidden talent or develop an existing one
- n. Sophia Zhao (translated by Kevin Zhao) stated that she supports the auditions, this is an equal opportunity to present their talents
- o. Queenie Yuho stated that screened schools can accommodate students on every skill level, it can be discriminatory if screened schools set aside seats for students who need extra help, but the criteria is based on race or ethnicity instead of ability, knowledge, or resources that they didn't receive
- p. Michelle Magnus stated that It seems like the school was built to fulfill the need of overcrowding in that community but it should be left as a middle school for the community until there are more schools to alleviate overcrowding, asked about an engineering or stem program that the former Chancellor promised to provide
- q. Chien Kwok (CEC 2) stated it is important to support students who have put in a lot of work, having access to a program doesn't mean a student is interested, it's about the student's effort, but why should they take a spot if they are not interested
- r. Minchen stated that we need to maintain standards in education and the spots should go to children who will truly benefit from the opportunities, trust the teachers and experts to spot those children
- s. Julia Leavengood-Boxer stated that the MS 936 principal and teachers don't see how limited and prohibitive the auditions process is for students who have not had enrichment

outside of school, or are limited by their bandwidth while juggling the stressors of the pandemic

- t. Paulette Ha-Healy read from the OPD presentation from October 2019 “the middle school will open with sixth grade in the 2020-2021 school year...planned to operate with a choice admissions methods open to students and residents of district 20,” was hopeful that there would be a middle school setting for D75
- u. Kaushik Das (CEC 2) stated that CEC 2 passed two similar resolutions in support of the middle school evolution and the high school admissions process, dubious about the sibling preference policy, high school application process makes no sense
- v. Yim supports the MS 936 auditions, unlike academic screening, it’s not something that students can cram for, whether students have talent or not is pretty straightforward
- w. Robert Aguilar (statement from a constituent) stated that there was no mention of the change, encouraged kids to attend even if they didn’t have experience in the arts, (for himself) stated that the original intention was for an open admission school, not a screened school
- x. Ana Maria Aguilar stated that families had hoped that their children could go to middle school in their neighborhood, It is unfortunate that people not from the neighborhood who do not understand the struggles of our children are making an impactful decision that is life changing to our children
- y. Adele Doyle (former CEC 20 President) stated that under the former administration, over two-thirds of students from PS 503/506 gained admission to MS 936, the school was never initially conceived as a choice school to benefit one zip code over another, but as an arts opportunity to keep talented students with a clear passion for the arts from leaving our district.
- z. Kathy Qin thinks that auditions are important for an arts middle school because the faculty will be sure they can provide education for students who are serious about art, all students should be given opportunity to discover their potential and the love for arts but there are many enrichment programs where they can discover their potential
- aa. Colleen MacDonald (PS 506 Community School Director) wants to amplify the messages from students and parents who shared that students didn’t discover their talents or didn’t have their talent fostered until middle school, students have asked for a middle school that’s inclusive supportive and close to their home, there are students who are unable to afford the lessons and because of the pandemic the school hasn’t been able to provide free lessons
- bb. Elaine Fridlin stated that parents have advocated and pleaded to have an audition style school in district 20, MS 936 is the first of its kind and should be applauded, having screened auditions does not stop other elementary schools and other Middle schools from instituting an arts program at their school that is not screened or audition based
- cc. Shahna Ahmed stated that having an art school in district 20 is going to benefit the entire Community, the school looks for passion for the arts not proficiency, it was always meant to be a school for district 20 to give the entire Community access to education in the arts
- dd. Yesen Melendez-Jimenez stated that the last minute decision of having an audition process for the 2022 2023 school year has become an additional stress to what is already a stressful time, process should be rolled out for when parents will have the chance to

understand the requirements needed and can support their children with creating an audition piece that will show their true potential

- ee. Christina Frisone works at MS 936 and sees that teachers have students who do not want to be there, no matter how much parents want them to be involved in the arts it's not something that they care about, when somebody just doesn't have a passion for it and they don't want to be there, it distracts other children that want to be there, it's not fair to the teachers that want to get through one class and can't because there are students that don't want to be involved.
- ff. Donghui Zang if a child passes the audition then that proves the child has talent, the school cannot be open and accessible to all students because there are a limited number of seats, all students have the potential to learn and succeed, if they don't succeed in the talents where they should have it's the fault of the adults who educate them, not the admissions process
- gg. Alan Aja stated that the official document from the ODP guided the former council's vote and it was explicit that the building was to address severe overcrowding, at no point did it state that it would be a screened school, the controversy around it was will there be enough D75 seats, the fact that they want to turn it into an admissions/screened school is unconscionable
- hh. 李校长 stated that Nepal has a great audition system to attract the best students, these students have the passion and enthusiasm to work hard and be successful, these auditions will teach the students that they need to work hard and be successful rather than telling them to use the lottery system and depend on luck, NYC has fine art schools of which none use a lottery system
- ii. Faith Rivera stated that many claim that auditions don't stop elementary school students from participating in enrichment activities, but there aren't any in the community, there are no options for her students to explore enrichment opportunities outside of school, there is not enough time to support students in the admissions process, if the school does want to implement it needs time to be rolled out efficiently so that teachers, students and parents are well aware of this process and have enough time.

## VII. Resolutions

- a. Resolution on School Governance-District Leadership Team Membership
  - i. Steve Stowe introduced a resolution requesting that the CEC president (or a representative) be made a permanent member of the District Leadership Team
  - ii. Comments from the Council
    - 1. Kevin Zhao asked if there are any parents on the DLT
  - iii. Steve Stowe made a motion to vote
    - 1. Steve Stowe- Yes
    - 2. Jennifer Hu- Yes
    - 3. Elizabeth Chan- Excused
    - 4. Vito LaBella- Yes
    - 5. Marie Brugueras- Yes
    - 6. Ghada Amin- Yes
    - 7. Jona Isufi- Yes
    - 8. Li Ping Jiang- Yes
    - 9. Maya Rozenblat- Excused
    - 10. Joyce Xie- Yes
    - 11. Kevin Zhao- Yes



- iv. Motion passes with 9 Yes; and 2 Excused
- b. Resolution on the Superintendent Evaluation Process
  - i. This resolution calls for strengthening parent involvement and transparency in evaluating the Superintendent, and giving the CEC evaluation equal weight as the DOE evaluations
  - ii. Comments from the Council
    - 1. No council members had comments
  - iii. Steve Stowe made a motion to vote, Second: Vito LaBella
 

1. Steve Stowe- Yes	7. Jona Isufi- Yes
2. Jennifer Hu- Abstain	8. Li Ping Jiang- Yes
3. Elizabeth Chan- Excused	9. Maya Rozenblat- Excused
4. Vito LaBella- Yes	10. Joyce Xie- Yes
5. Marie Brugueras- Yes	11. Kevin Zhao- Yes
6. Ghada Amin- Yes	
  - iv. Motion passes with 8 Yes; 1 Abstain, and 2 Excused
- c. Resolution to Expand or Eliminate Sibling Preference in Middle School Admissions
  - i. This resolution is a response to the new sibling preference in middle school admissions which excludes students who have siblings in seventh grade
  - ii. Comments from the Council
    - 1. Vito LaBella stated that this goes back to Chancellor Carranza saying that no single ethnic group has the right to the schools
    - 2. Steve Stowe stated that the Chief of Enrollment said suspension of the schools was only temporary and sibling preference is based on a program that is unproven
    - 3. Jennifer Hu asked if the DOE will be publishing any data from this experiment
    - 4. Jona Isufi asked for clarification on the sibling preference policy
  - iii. Steve Stowe made a motion to vote,
 

1. Steve Stowe- Yes	7. Jona Isufi- Abstain
2. Jennifer Hu- Yes	8. Li Ping Jiang- Yes
3. Elizabeth Chan- Excused	9. Maya Rozenblat- Excused
4. Vito LaBella- Yes	10. Joyce Xie- Yes
5. Marie Brugueras- Yes	11. Kevin Zhao- Yes
6. Ghada Amin- Yes	
  - iv. Motion passes with 8 Yes; 1 Abstain, and 2 Excused
- d. Resolution on the High School Admission Policy
  - i. With the new admissions policy that evaluates students by group rather than their individual GPAs, this resolution asks for principals of specialized high schools to take the maximum number of students and have a waiting list which would expire in October rather than July
  - ii. Comments from the Council
    - 1. Jennifer Hu stated that this new policy is confusing for parents and is a way of obfuscating the admissions process, especially as it seems to have been done without parent engagement
  - iii. Steve Stowe made a motion to vote

1. Steve Stowe- Yes
2. Jennifer Hu- Yes
3. Elizabeth Chan- Excused
4. Vito LaBella- Yes
5. Marie Brugueras- Excused
6. Ghada Amin- Yes

7. Jona Isufi- Yes
8. Li Ping Jiang- Yes
9. Maya Rozenblat- Excused
10. Joyce Xie- Yes
11. Kevin Zhao- Yes

iv. Motion passes with 8 Yes; and 3 Excused

- e. Vito LaBella made a motion to speak on the lottery numbers for middle and high school enrollment, Second- Steve Stowe
  - i. The lottery number will be the deciding factor for admissions
  - ii. Parents can get their child's lottery number
  - iii. Asked Superintendent Pretto to allow principals to provide parents with a template letter to send to the FOIL officer for parents to get that number

### **VIII. Adjourn**

- a. Motion to adjourn: Steve Stowe, Second: Jennifer Hu
  - i. All in favor
- b. Meeting adjourned at 10:54 pm

Submitted: Natalia Mondesir

Date: February 15, 2022