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THE CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD SIX
211 EAST 43RD STREET, SUITE 1404
NEW YORK, NY 10017

**Manhattan Community Board Six
Health & Education Committee
January 22, 2019, 6:30 PM
CB6 Office, 211 E. 43rd St., Suite 1404**

Meeting Minutes

Present: Elvy Barroso (Chair), Ahsia Badi, Brooke Goldman, Abigail Krusemark, Rich Mintz, Seema Shah, David Tsin, Carin van der Donk

Excused: Paige Judge, Claude L. Winfield

Absent: John Keller (Vice Chair), Louise Dankberg, Dan Devine, Karen Moore

Guests: Theseus Roche, Manhattan Youth; Michael Leeyow, Manhattan Youth; Adam Shea, Manhattan Youth; Julia Wischnevsky, Manhattan Leadership Council; Acadia Bost, Manhattan Leadership Council; Jenny Liu, Manhattan Leadership Council; Sasha Hamel, Manhattan Leadership Council; Neve Diaz-Carr, Manhattan Leadership Council; David Getz, Principal at East Side Middle School; Edward V. Evanick, member of the public

Call to Order and Adoption of the Agenda/Previous Meeting's Minutes

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM.

A motion was made to amend the agenda to permit the guests from Manhattan Youth, who were not scheduled in advance, to make their presentation during the Committee Business, before the Committee addressed old and new business. The motion was seconded and passed.

A motion was made to adopt the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded and passed.

A motion was made to adopt the minutes from the meeting of December 17, 2018. The motion was seconded and passed.

Committee Business

Agenda Item #1: Manhattan Leadership Council Presentation

The presenters from the Manhattan Leadership Council (MLC) addressed the Committee. MLC is an initiative organized by middle school principals in NYC Department of Education (DOE) District 2, comprising volunteer students currently in middle school as well as some former middle school students who have proceeded into high school. Both students and middle school staff were present, with the students presenting.

The MLC members have been researching mental health issues in DOE schools and prepared a proposal, which is being presented to multiple Manhattan Community Boards. The proposal is intended to increase the availability of mental health services to students in DOE schools, as well as to reduce stigma.

The presenters noted that the average period from onset to treatment of a mental health condition is 8 to 10 years, during which period the condition can worsen and can even become life-threatening. They observed that a Harvard study has identified a correlation between children's mental health and level of support and their performance in school over time.

The proposed policy would provide for the placement of dedicated social workers in all DOE schools, with the intent of making basic mental health services and support available to all students upon request, without regard to their economic background or family status and without requiring participation or involvement from parents.

The presenters noted that one way to reduce stigma is to train teachers and school staff in identifying and addressing students' mental health concerns. They observed that the guidance counselors currently in schools, the closest thing to social workers available to most students, are primarily preoccupied with the high-school-to-college pipeline and may not have either the time or the training to serve as mental health counselors.

They described their own experiences in DOE schools, which have involved academic stress and the prioritization of school performance over mental health, an attitude that is also shared by many students' parents. They also noted that many students deal with family and social crises at a young age and may not be able to turn to family members

for support, making it imperative that resources be available even at the elementary school level.

They intend to call for a dedicated funding stream to ensure that the social workers they propose to provide will be available in perpetuity in all DOE schools. They noted that school is the one NYC experience shared by all young people across the city, making it the best touchpoint at which to place resources and services intended to reach students of all backgrounds.

In response to a question from the Chair about existing health services available from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), the students noted that such services, while they exist, are not available or not implemented by administrators in every school, and not accessible to all students.

In response to a question, the presenters noted that the mental health curriculum already proposed by the DOE is not mandatory, and would provide some basic information but would neither address stigma nor provide services or support.

In response to another question, the presenters said they would propose 1 social worker per 100 students, which is the New York State recommended average load for guidance counselors. (They noted that the actual New York State average in practice is 1 guidance counselor per 491 students.)

A committee member said that if CB6 were asked to draft a resolution in favor of the proposal, it would be helpful to have sourced statistics about the situation to cite, and the presenters agreed.

Agenda Item #2: Manhattan Youth Presentation

The presenters from Manhattan Youth (MY) addressed the Committee. They operate afterschool programs at the elementary and middle school level in Manhattan, and have operated for 30 years. Since city-funded middle school afterschool programs were expanded under the de Blasio administration, they have expanded to cover most of DOE District 2, including four middle schools in Manhattan Community District Six (CD6). They noted that their programs are well-received and their relationships with CB6 schools are good, and their aim in presenting to us is to introduce themselves so as to expand their network of supporters within our community.

They noted that they have been funded under the de Blasio expansion for three years. In the schools in which MY work, they serve as a master operator of all activities after

the formal school day ends, such as theater, sports, and so on, directly paying out of their grant for all the staff involved in managing those programs; this enables the MY schools to operate coherent afterschool programs in which all activities are run consistently and school resources are used efficiently. They organize and operate the Middle School Athletic League, the league play umbrella for Manhattan middle schools. They also note that their staff provide support for teachers and administrators in responding to changing demographics in the schools in which they operate.

A Committee member asked about how they were selected, and they replied that the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) ran a competitive bidding process; they won a competitive bid for 16 schools and then DYCD began offering them the opportunity to run programs in additional schools. Their existing contracts last through 2020 and they anticipate that a competitive bidding process will take place at that time.

A Committee member asked about the registration process and whether there was a cap on students. They said there was no cap on participation overall in any school, although they complied with state- and city-mandated teacher-student ratios and safety regulations, which sometimes limited participation in certain activities during certain terms. They noted that they are accommodating to parents in finding suitable placements for students on a case-by-case basis.

Agenda Item #3: Committee Leads: Health, Education, Policy/Resolution Writing

In the policy/resolution writing lead, Committee Member Abigail Krusemark reported on the Trump Administration's proposals to amend federal immigration regulations to expand the definition of "public charge" so as to deny the benefits of legal immigration status to a broader share of applicants. This proposal is aggressively opposed by virtually all NYC elected and appointed officials, with the opposition led by the Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA).

In summary, federal law permits officials to deny green cards and visas if they find that the applicant is likely to become a "public charge." Current regulations defined "public charge" only to include those people who are anticipated to rely on cash assistance for subsistence.

The proposed new regulations would dramatically expand the definition of who is a public charge, by excluding people who have or are likely to receive certain specified public benefits. This would include: non-emergency Medicaid, SNAP, Medicare Part D, and housing assistance. It would also apply a "totality of the circumstances" test for the

purpose of increasing the likelihood that a person would be marked as a public charge based on risk factors, regardless of history.

The impact would be to discourage legal use of benefits and services, including those provided by the City of New York to its residents without regard to their legal status. Likely consequences for New York City would be significant damage to public health; reductions in income for families due to health, food, and housing insecurity; and reduced consumer expenditure in the range of \$400 million per year.

The public comment period on the proposed rule change ended on December 12th. The New York City Council, the State Assembly, and State Senator Liz Krueger, among many others, submitted formal comments opposing the rule change. A second draft of the rule is likely to be issued, which will trigger another round of public comment if changes are significant. Then, once a final rule is issued, if it is, it will probably be litigated in federal court.

In the education lead, Seema Shah reported on three items being watched:

- (1) Mayoral control of DOE schools has been extended for 3 years, making this the longest period of mayoral control in city history.
- (2) A proposal that would change the method for teacher assessments is in committee in the Legislature. The City of New York has not yet taken a position.
- (3) The U.S. Department of Education denied a waiver request by New York State that would have permitted New York schools to accommodate students in grades 4-8 with disabilities that precluded them from participation in grade-level assessment tests by testing them using tests one or two grade levels below their nominal grade level.

Chair's Report

The Chair requested that Committee members review the email from the CB6 District Manager regarding the Committee's role in the New York City budget process.

Adjournment

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to adjourn the meeting. The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 7:39 PM.

Minutes submitted by: Rich Mintz.