

CB12M
Youth and Education Committee (Y&EC)
In collaboration with
Neighborhood Advisory Board (NAB) Manhattan District 12- DYCD

Meeting Minutes #6

Monday, June 8, 2020

Location: VIRTUAL Transmitted by CB12M Office Staff

Committee Members Present: Fe Florimon, Chair and NAB Member; Waldy Cruz, Assist Chair; Maria Luna; Gabriela Estrella; Jonathan Nunez-Frometa; Christina Richiez;

Committee Member(s) Excused: Ariel Miranda; **Absent:** Glennis Aquino-Gill; Miriam James;

Co-host Committee: DYCD-Neighborhood Advisory Board (NAB) Manhattan District 12 Members Present: Kari Caprini, President; Jahzeel Montes, Vice-President; Alfreda Goods, Secretary; Young Curtis, Assist. Secretary and CB12M Member; Edda Santiago and CB12M Member; Nyma Silver; Jorge Mendizabel; Deputy Director;

Panel Guests: Manuel Ramirez, Superintendent of SD6; Denice Williams, Deputy Commission DYCD; Blanca Battino, SEL Trainer, RTI Specialist and Retired Principal of District 6 NYC Public School; Yvonne Stennett, Executive Director Community League of the Heights (CLOTH); Sharon G. Kim, LMSW, Program Manager, Uptown Hub, Division of Community & Population Health-NY-Presbyterian; Yirely Bencosme, Student; Josefina Diaz- Parent; Yubelka Nolasco, Parent;

The virtual meeting was called to order by Chair, Fe Florimon at 7:15 pm.

Discussion that took place as indicated below:

Chair Florimon's statement: The *"Informative conversation on the impact of Covid-19 on our students, families and community"* was held in collaboration with members of the Youth and Education Committee (Y&EC) and the DYCD's Neighborhood Advisory Board (NAB) with the purpose to obtain feedback from community leaders, educators, parents, and students on the challenges faced with COVID-19.

Members of both committees (Y&EC and NAB) and guest panelists were welcomed and introduced. Deepest gratitude was also given to all members of the panel for their volunteered time and knowledge. Chair asked kindly and respectfully for a moment of silence in the memory Mr. George Floyd (and his family), who in a tragic event, was killed in Minneapolis, Minnesota by a police officer. The Chair then proceeded with the introduction of moderators Waldy Cruz, Assistant Chair of the Y&EC and Kari Caprini, President of the NAB.

Panelists' Statements

1. Manual Ramirez (Superintendent-SD6)

- There are issues with teachers lacking technology knowledge and navigating their classrooms with the students.
- Parents are unable to pay for internet to provide service for children because of economic issues. Some parents have lost their jobs in the service industry.

- Bi-lingual issues with parents speaking predominantly Spanish and may be unable to assist children with their homework.
- Undocumented individuals are fearful of getting PCs and signing papers for fear of deportation.
 - A suggestion was made for agencies that work with this demographic population accept the computers and distribute them to these constituents.
- Some homes are not equipped to accommodate students' study areas.
- The issue of student engagement was discussed for possible remedies.
- The upcoming school year was discussed, and it was determined no specific practices have been put in place. Schools may operate in a hybrid capacity. However, the Board of Education is working on the plans for reopening.
- Challenges were present prior to COVID-19 and now there are more challenges with remote learning. There was a need for support with grief, anxiety, and social well being of staff, teachers, parents, and students.
- Expectation of teachers providing instruction virtually is challenging because it has never been done before at this level.
- The DOE has provided families with over 400 devices initially and more were allocated for families without computers. There have been issues with the laptops being lost or stolen and with wi-fi services.
- A question was asked whether remote learning was effective. Superintendent Ramirez responded that there were issues with educating the students prior to this pandemic and this has made it even more challenging.
- The NYC public schools had to switch to removed learning in one week and this did pose a large challenge.
- Issues
 - Not enough laptops
 - Laptops lost or stolen
 - Internet Services
 - Parents unfamiliar with instructing students
 - Lack of supplies for activities
 - Some teachers lack technological skills and want more training

2. Denice Williams (Deputy Commissioner, DYCD)

- Students are traumatized about the recent death of George Floyd. These are the services provided:
- Youth Town Hall Meetings in August
 - Allow youth to express their feelings
 - Develop a youth agenda to present to candidates by the end of July
- AMPLIFY with CUNY
 - Youth research on how COVID has affected the community
 - Paid internships
 - Policies for their community
- Issues
 - Runaway (RFP) to provide isolation for youth with COVID-19 in isolated hotel rooms to be away from the shelter.
 - Need federal support to move forward with
 - Flats and ladders
 - Resume writing

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- Work readiness
- Services are provided for youth 14 and over

3. Blanca Battino (Retired Principle-NYC P.S. Dist 6)

- She has been communicating with Principals, parents and teachers to determine major issues with remote learning in District 6.
- District 6 distributed over 4, 500 IPADS and this amount did not include the thousands of tech equipment teachers gave from classrooms and tech labs. It was evident many of the students did not have the technology at home that can be found in other affluent communities. Free Wi-Fi connections were very important because parents could not afford to pay given the economic challenges.
- Teachers felt that they had limited technological skills and requested on-going professional development in this area when school re-opens.
- 84% of the District 6 students are second language learners and 29% of these students are new immigrants to the schools. Limitations in language and technology skills negatively impacted academic progress with remote learning. Additional support is necessary for these students.
- Parents had difficulty supporting their children with remote learning. Language, education and lack of experience with technology made it impossible to help their children achieve. Parent workshops to address technology are important to the community.
- Materials and supplies required to complete assignments was many times not available in the home of struggling parents. Remote learning assignments could not be completed. This disparity between affluent communities and poorer communities needs to be addressed.
- The stressors present in households due to Covid-19, food shortage, high rents, unemployment and overcrowded apartments, caused anxiety, depression, domestic violence and high stress in adults and children.
- Social Emotional Learning must be practiced in every school and integrated into every subject. Partnering with CBO's that provide these mental health services and or having more counselors is a priority.

4. Yvonne Stennett (Executive Director, CLOTH)

- Have been opening pantry four days each week and have distributed over 6000 packets of food. They have also purchased a van for senior delivery. They also have been working to support local merchants.
- After School staff has now been working with parents and students in support. They are also involved with supporting distant learning. Thinking of ways to keep youth engaged in remote learning. It's an on-going battle.
- We don't see an end to food insecurity. If anything it will get bigger. Unemployment is still going up and stimulus hasn't helped.
- Food Pantry will likely be open much longer at its current timing.
 - We will need better coordination with food delivery programs. Programs rolled out without structure and accountability and how food comes to our community.
 - List of concerns:
 1. Big issue was coordination.
 2. Economic development and businesses that were closing.

- 3. Workforce development.
- 4. CBO's and their funding.
- 5. ESL Programs in our community.
- 6. The academic gap. There will be a great disadvantage.
- Must advocate for equity in all that we do.

Economic Issues

- Families are concerned about food, paying rent, and the education of their children.
- People are relocating and this impacting the tax base
- Fear of budget cuts to youth programs
- Economic support for small business impacted by COVID-19
- Parents were concerned about paying rent
 - Internet services for students
 - Stress of financial issues because of COVID-19
 - Unemployment
 - Laptops for students
 - Possible support from community to help with internet services
 - Concern about student continuing their education without computers
 - Issue with undocumented individuals fear of signing for lap-tops
 - The suggestion was made for agencies providing services to this demographic to obtain the computers and be responsible for assigning them to families.

5. Sharon Kim (Program Manager, Uptown HUB)

- Housed with NYPH. They have had to adjust to continue providing services. In collaboration with parents, have offered 3 main pillars to youth.
 - Supportive Guidance - All youth are assigned a mentor/HUB advocate (for resources etc.)
 - Virtual programs via Zoom (Self Care, Movie Night, Game Night - offering something Monday-Friday and open to the community regardless of being a HUB Youth)
 - Behavioral Health Arm -therapy, support services. How to cope and manage.
- They are talking about resources needed in the community.
- In light of the events and young people to promote racial justice. All of our work has to be rooted in anti-racism framework. Most of the issues we face evolve the lack of commitment and resources to youth of color.
- They are focusing on collective impact. They need capital and human resources. Need caring adults to build relationship with young people. To be mentors, offer advice etc.

6. Parent and Student Testimonies:

Ybelka Nolasco (parent)

- The mother of three is experiencing financial and emotional hardships. She was working in a beauty salon. But, due to the pandemic, she has been unemployed for the past three months without unemployment benefits. She hasn't been able to pay rent and the landlord is asking for payment. The internet for her daughter's virtual learning has been suspended.

Josefina Diaz (parent)

- Josefina thanked everyone for the opportunity to speak. She is a survivor of COVID-19, but is not exempt from financial hardship. She is receiving unemployment benefits, but is concerned with the

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possibility of losing the internet. The internet is for her daughter and it helps with her remote learning. She cannot afford to pay for internet services.

- She is also concerned about friends who are undocumented and have not completed the school's application for their children to receive a laptop. In her opinion, there is a pattern among undocumented parents who are afraid to apply for school services due to their immigration status.
- She asked what sort of initiative will be taken to solve the internet problem. What will happen to students who won't be able to complete the school year due to the lack of technology?
- The moderator, Ms Kari Ciprian, responded that the committee is already working on the issue of technology. An additional response was provided by D.C. William stating that NYC Council and DOE are addressing the issue. She also stated computer makers and/or CBOs may help if they donate, for example, 100 computers to the students.

7. Yirelys Bencosme (student)

Yirely shares her experience with remote learning:

"I've been dealing with anxiety, and stress, due to the current situation (pandemic). My teachers have been very patient with me and have offered resources and support.

Now I would like to use the remaining of my time to raise awareness about the racial situation of this country. A few weeks ago, a mob of grown adults armed with rifles, were screaming and spitting at police, saying Nazi slang, and trying to get into different buildings. That group was left unharmed.

Now kids, adults and teens are lashing out against the injustice. They're creating unnecessary violence. They're being shot with rubber bullets and being gassed with pepper spray and facing unlawful arrests. Predominantly black neighborhoods are over policed, and black individuals are being overcharged by the court. Individuals with a lighter complexion are being undercharged.

Now let me give you a brief history lesson. A handful of the first police force was actually created to chase runaway slaves back to their masters. After slaves were freed, the club core system would overcharged them and try to find ways to charge freed black slaves, sending them back to slavery. I do compare that to what is happening now and nothing has changed. People are dying and the president doesn't care."...

To view the meeting please visit the link below. Feel free to subscribe and leave comments.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1hz5CYO11Q>

For those interested, the website for Uptown Hub is: <https://www.nyp.org/acn/community-programs/uptown-hub>

NOTE: Thank you all for making possible the materialization of this important panel discussion.

Thank you to our note takers, Alfreda Goods, Young Curtis and Waldys Cruz.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40pm