

## MINUTES

### YOUTH & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Topic of Meeting: Presentation entitled “Youth Violence & Bullying in Public Schools”

Date: June 11, 2014

Location: George Washington High School, 549 Audubon Ave (Auditorium)  
New York NY 10040

Committee Members present:

- Fe Floriman, Chair
- Alyce Smith, Vice-Chair
- Shah Ally

Community Board Members present:

- Christopher Smith
- Angela Sanchez

Panel Members:

- Cecelia Williams, Esq., Assistant Corporation Counsel, New York City Law Department
- Erin Gover, Esq., Assistant Corporation Counsel, New York City Law Department
- Christian Claudio, New York City Administration for Children’s Services
- Sandra Harris, Assistant Vice-President for Government and Community Affairs, Columbia University Medical Center
- Guillermo Rivera, Senior Admissions Counselor, City College of New York
- Sharon Robinson-Hewitt, Police Officer, 33<sup>rd</sup> Pct.
- Milton Camacho, Police Officer, Community Affairs
- Shah Ally, Law Offices of Shahabuddeen A. Ally, P.C.
- A second panel consisted of 4 students from the High School for Health Careers and Sciences at the George Washington Educational Campus.

Note: The audience consisted of members from the New York City Police Department, School Safety, Department of Education officials (school principal, teachers and staff), representatives from elected officials, parents and students.

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1. Opening remarks – Fe Floriman
2. Christopher Smith moderated the presentation. The program began with a presentation by the panelist.
3. Presentation: (summary of individual presentation)
  - **Shah Ally** – spoke on the issue of bullying and the changing nature of bullying. Spoke on the need to recognize the warning signs of potential bullying. Identified the use of social media as a potential source of bullying.
  - **Erin Gover & Cecelia Williams** – spoke on the legal significance behind bullying. It was noted that there is no penal law definition of bullying, rather spoke on the collateral crimes associated with bullying, such as assaults. Panelist gave an overview on the juvenile delinquency process.
  - **Police Officer Robinson-Hewitt** – spoke on pro-social activities available to youth from the NYPD such as the Explorers club. Officer pointed out that the NYPD has Youth Officers and a Community Affairs office that are available if there are suspected cases of bullying. Also suggested to parents that regular contact with the schools and teachers could be helpful in identifying bullying.
  - **Christian Claudio** – spoke on his life story of being bullied and ultimately, turning to violence and drugs. Shared that he spent time in jail and joined various gangs. Also shared that he was able to transform his life. Made the point that bullying can have dire consequences on the person being bullied. Stated that there many ways to help people who are being bullied.
  - **Sandra Harris** – is a social worker by training and spoke on the critical need to identify the different levels of

bullying. Urged parents to talk to their children and to maintain an open channel of dialogue.

- **Guillermo Rivera** – shared that he was bullied at a young age and turned to gang membership to combat bullying and find security. Shared that he used education as a way out of gangs and as a way to succeed. Suggested that parents play a more active role in the lives of their children.
- **Police Officer Milton Camacho** – noted that the Community Affairs offers youth services where presentations are done on cyber-bullying. Urged parents to monitor children’s social media usage as well as video games. Suggested that children be referred to pro-social activities such as P.A.L. and for Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP).
- **Student presentation** – students presented that bullying is ever present in schools. Students recall frequent verbal and emotional abuse, such as name-calling and intimidation. One student noted that the bullying in the school cast a “negative energy” that makes it difficult to learn. One student noted that jealousy is often the source of bullying, in that; some students who are slower academically lash out at other students. In terms of solutions, students suggest an open, honest line of communication between parents. Also suggested that parents become more vigilant regarding checking communication and activity on social media.

4. Questions to the Panels:

- **Question from the student panel to the “professionals” panel:** What are the legal consequences to bullying? The answer varied. It was noted that there exist no actual bullying violation of the penal law. But there could be

violations of other laws based on bullying, such as harassment, assault, menacing.

- **Question from the “professionals” panel to the student panel:** What would you do if you saw someone being bullied? The students all responded that they would intervene. They would talk to the parties involved to find out the source of the bullying and possible solutions. Students acknowledged that it is often not easy to intervene but necessary to do so.

5. Closing remarks: Chris Smith and Fe Florimon.