

Youth, Education, Libraries Committee

May 10, 2017

Committee Members Present:

Deirdre McIntosh-Brown (Co-Chair), Alec Barrett (Co-Chair), Ken Miles, Jen Silverman

Meeting called to order at 6:45pm.

Presentation: Shameek Robinson, SAT and College Planning Resources

Mr. Robinson works for the College Board and lives on 127th street - in CB9 and CSD5. His work entails talking to high school superintendents and principals. He is currently the only person at the College Board in charge of school outreach in NYC.

On April 5, every junior in NYC took SAT. Students didn't do very well. Benchmark for college readiness is 480 verbal for 530 math. No district average broke 500. CSS had better than average performance. FDA had lower than average performance. Initial numbers show 80-85% of kids took SAT during this year, up from 65-70% last year.

This was the first time the city covered the cost of the SAT. However, individual schools have to decide whether to administer the PSAT in the fall, and that test is tied to National Merit Scholarships. This year, the College Board is offering an August administration for the first time.

He provided SAT scores for the districts around us, but the precise numbers are not yet public. District 5 did better than District 6 and the state average, while District 6 did worse than the state average. CSS and CCNY High School for Math Science and Engineering were the only schools where over 50% of takers met both English and Math college-ready benchmarks. The combined D5 and D6 average was 18%.

College Board has a college planning resource called Big Future -- resources on \$3.2 billion in scholarships, college search engine, articles, videos. Resources in both English and Spanish, and entirely free. Help students get ideas about careers and majors.

Ms. Rodriguez asked about resources for parents. Mr. Robinson said that he works to get information to schools, who should then reach out to their PTAs and other parents. CEC5, which is composed of parents, can also help spread that information. Mr. Robinson also participates frequently in CEC5 meetings. He also works with NYPL branches to educate their liaisons about the resources.

Mr. Robinson also talked about the academic practice resources on Khan Academy, with which the College Board has partnered to do SAT, PSAT, and AP preparation. Khan Academy has videos, practice problems, and customizable tests. Students who have used that resource saw an average 115 point increase.

The College Board is working on getting their data in front of teachers and principals. Schools have access to data portals that have in-depth reports showing student subscores on individual question types and sections.

Challenges for schools might include the ratio of school counselors to students. There are a lot of important conversations with adults, about signing up for tests, doing research about schools, applying for college, etc., that can't happen if schools don't have the resources. There are also challenges on the family side: many parents not know about these processes and opportunities, and may be intimidated by seeking out information for themselves.

Ms. Rodriguez spoke about some of the challenges understanding the process for standardized tests where she felt she did not have access to enough information early enough in her daughter's high school application process. She ended up taking the information as she learned it, in some cases too late, when her daughter was in 7th grade at The School at Columbia. As she learned the information, she started sharing it with other parents in her community, and will continue to do that. She also expressed frustration with the effect standardized tests have of reducing a child to a number.

Her daughter said that her secondary placement teacher did not strike a successful balance between providing students information they needed and helping students manage the pressure of the process.

Mr. Robinson talked about how most public schools' mission is to get students to finish 8th grade, not explicitly to get students admitted to high school. A few select schools do push to get their students into high school (and high schools to get students into college) but for most it's not part of the school's responsibility and therefore not a priority for how they allocate their resources and staff.

He recommended some additional information: InsideSchools, Goddard Riverside Options Center.

Presentation: Joseline from the District Attorney's office

The DA's office has a third round of their Clean Slate initiative -- the opportunity for people to clear their summons for non-violent offenses. The event will be in a church on June 17th.

They also announced another \$10 million in local organizations through their Criminal Justice Investment Initiative, focusing on LGBTQ, immigrant, and deaf/hard-of-hearing communities.

They are currently reviewing applications and interviewing students for their summer internships. They received a large number of applications and are looking to bring in 25 interns.

Discussion: Krystle Rodriguez, parent at The School at Columbia

After her visit to CB9's full board meeting in April, Ms. Rodriguez finally had a meeting with the principal and the student who had been bullying her daughter and that student's parent. The bullying student described the behavior as being characteristic of interactions among students at the school. That student's parent was not aware of the behavior or culture. In this case the student was using social media, and the parent did not know that her child had social media accounts.

Ms. Rodriguez expressed skepticism that teachers and administrators had managed to remain unaware, or unconcerned, about the way students interact with each other. Moreover, her daughter has suffered emotionally from her experience being bullied which is affecting her academic work, without the kind of support or sympathy from teachers that she would expect. The entire experience has strained Ms. Rodriguez's relationships with other parents and adults at the school.

A fellow parent at The School at Columbia who came to support Ms. Rodriguez shared her feeling that she and several other parents were disappointed with the way the school had handled these school culture problems among students, and the lack of a support system for families from the neighborhood who are on financial aid and do not enjoy the same academic resources of more affluent families.

The Parents Association has not been particularly supportive or helpful, so a handful of parents have their own informal support group to work through these issues. Information about parent meetings has not been effectively communicated to all parents.

SYEEP

Students have been accepted and the program is getting responses from them currently. Around 90 students were accepted and the program continues to secure work sites. Between 25 and 30 have been lined up so far. The program will provide three orientation dates at Our Children's Foundation to learn about the program. The program has identified some teachers to staff the enrichment component.

Parent Empowerment Training

Mr. Barrett has contacted Joe Rogers at TC.

Summer Opportunities Fair

Mr. Miles learned about a similar event at Columbia which we can coordinate with. Ms. McIntosh-Brown heard from a Harlem basketball league that is looking to host a big event on August 5 to provide information on sports, health, extracurricular programs, etc., which will include an "outdoor classroom".

Meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.