



COMMUNITY DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL 3

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Friday April 30, 2010

Via Email

Ms. Kathleen Grimm - Deputy Chancellor

Ms. Elizabeth Sciabarra – CEO, Office of Student Enrollment

Ms. Elizabeth Rose – Director, Office of Portfolio Planning

New York City Department of Education

Tweed Courthouse, 52 Chambers Street

New York, NY 10007

Re: G&T Enrollment Issues and the Implementation of PS 452

Dear Chancellor Grimm, Dear Chairwoman Sciabarra, Dear Director Rose:

Congratulations on the final PEP approval of PS 452. The addition of these elementary school seats in District 3 is a welcome first step in recognizing the on-going overcrowding crisis in our neighborhoods.

Echoing the terrific letter sent to Chancellor Klein earlier today by our elected officials – of which we are most appreciative - we write to address next steps concerning the implementation of PS 452 and more generally issues related to the enrollment process and the ripple effects for other schools in our District.

G&T Placement and PS 452 Offers

As you know, the timing of G&T offers is the Achilles heel of enrollment issues affecting many of our schools, including all D3 elementary schools south of 110th Street. As early as the first District 3 West Side War Room meeting, we raised the issue of the negative impact on enrollment planning of the current delayed gifted and talented placements. At that meeting Deputy Chancellor Grimm said she would review and seek to improve the current policy.

Specifically, if G&T placements were made earlier in the year, it would significantly assist planning and enrollment at all of our schools and help to reduce the already high level of angst among Kindergarten parents awaiting placements. This is especially critical given that the waitlist and overcrowding problems in D3 are forcing student movements to and from every school in the Southern portion of the district, which movements in turn can not be finalized until after G&T placement is concluded.

Since the scores for G&T hopefuls have already been distributed, and applications are due today, it is unreasonable to allow 6 or more weeks to generate G&T offers. We urge the DoE to move up G&T offers to May 14th, and require families to accept or decline such offers by May 26th (i.e. within 10 business days). That information would enable the DoE to shake out the vagaries of G&T placements before generating alternate offers. The virtue of this process is that it would eliminate duplicate efforts by both the DoE and families by avoiding the creation of an alternate offer that would then be superseded by a G&T placement, and enable the dominoes to fall into place more quickly. It would also allay fears that naturally follow when corrections and errors need to be addressed in the last week of school when administrators, families and children are all distracted by end-of-year activities and responsibilities.

Even if the totality of G&T placements cannot be accelerated, we believe that at least the siblings of G&T students who qualified for placement should receive their offers and be allowed to register immediately after today's application deadline. This will provide a first step in the expected G&T shake-out.

On a related note, a process that ensures that gifted and talented classes are filled also frees up seats in general education sections. Last year, there was no effective mechanism by which schools could fill gifted and talented seats that had become available. As a result, this year, some gifted and talented kindergarten sections ended up with fewer than 25 students. However it is accomplished, be it through some form of gifted and talented wait lists, multiple rounds of gifted and talented placement or otherwise, a mechanism should be established to maximize placement in all available gifted and talented seats.

Creating a Supportive Community Around PS 452

The goal of creating a stable and supportive community around PS 452 would be best accomplished by scheduling a meeting between prospective PS 452 families and new principal Scott Parker as soon as feasible. Scott made an impressive presentation at the April 21st CEC meeting, and allowing a wider audience to hear from the new school's leader will help to allay the concerns of those who will be presented with the choice of a new school.

It would be ideal if that meeting could be coupled with an open house or tour of the IS 44 complex, at which point we'd hope that you could also show, even in rough terms, where the PS 452 classrooms will be located in its first year.

As you know, members of our community are concerned that age-appropriate facilities (e.g. bathrooms, water fountains, swinging doors) be installed in this middle school building well in advance of the new school year. Addressing these reasonable concerns at the earliest possible opportunity, at a meeting with Scott and/or an open house or tour, is an important way for the DoE to demonstrate to the affected families that it has a continuing commitment to PS 452.

Another question that will need to be addressed quickly is the mechanism by which the ATS or other relevant computer system will be updated to reflect the movements of families who have accepted or declined the various offers that will be coming their way.

We look forward to working with you on these and the myriad other issues that inevitably follow from an undertaking of this scale, including the sensitive handling of 044's co-location issues and the development of a sustainable, long term solution for the District's overcrowding problems.

Sincerely yours,



Noah E. Gotbaum, President
For and On Behalf of Community District Education Council 3

Cc: Congressman Jerald Nadler
Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer
State Senator Tom Duane
Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal
Assemblyman Dick Gottfried
Councilmember Gale Brewer
Chancellor Joel Klein
District 3 Community Superintendent, Dr. Roser Salavert
PS 452 School Leader, Scott Parker
CDEC 3 Members; CDEC 3 Overcrowding and Space Utilization Committee