



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 3

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COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 3

June 6, 2016, 9am

Middle School Committee Meeting

Joan of Arc, 154 West 93rd Street

Attendees: 23 people total, including the District Superintendent, Ilene Altschul, and 6 D3 Middle School Principals

Middle School Targets, introduced by Ilene Altschul

D3 Principals Diversity Taskforce- a voluntary group of approximately 15 principals. This Task Force formed to discuss the challenges the district faces in diversity. The population of the district is one of the most diverse in the city however are schools are some of the least diverse.

Middle School Special Education targets: Earlier in the year the district enacted a Special Education target of 19% for all middle schools in the district. This figure reflects the percentage of Special Education students across the district and is intended to even out the distribution of this population across schools.

Middle School Title 1 targets: Targets could be put in place for Title 1 students. The Superintendent is considering to enact a Title 1 target of 30% for all middle schools in the district. The targets are intended to offer access and equity to student of low socioeconomic status across the district.

In consultation with the office of enrollment the superintendent settled on 30% to best reflect the Title 1 populations of the district whilst not threatening any schools current Title 1 status. (Noted that in order to qualify as a Title 1 school it must have 60% of their enrollment as Title 1 students). She has looked into a 20% target but felt it would not sufficiently change the demographics of the middle schools.

This could be in place in time for September 2017 enrollment. In order to inform parents of these changes it should be in place in advance of the District Middle School Fair and MS Principals Forum in late September, early October 2016.

This is still a conversation with Middle School Principals and will be discussed at the next diversity task force meeting in June Principals. The District Superintendent will continue to work with the Office of Enrollment. The Superintendent is looking to make this decision in collaboration with parents and principals.

Discussion:

Parents voiced concern that this would disproportionately affect only two Middle Schools in the district. Parents discussed ways to reach the parent population and encourage them to look more broadly at all of the Middle Schools in the district. Many parents noted that the most important factor for them when evaluating middle schools is the schools state test scores. Questions were raised about meeting the needs of high achieving students and if there is sufficient programming and support for these students. The Middle School Choice system was questioned to see where family choice is reflected in the process. A number of people stated that parents did not want to feel forced to attend one school or another but rather that they choose it. Some parents questioned what tangible and/or programmatic changes could be used to entice families to look at more schools.

Principals spoke about the deep need to look beyond state test score when evaluating schools and the need for recognition of the achievement gap that many students are starting from. Some students are making significant academic gains however they started with lower academic level. It was noted that many students from the Northern half of the district are enrolled in Charter schools, often siphoning high achieving students from the public school system. It was noted the heterogeneous populations benefit all students. Many principals testified to the challenges of recruiting populations who have not historically attended their schools.

Sixth Grade High School Admissions Workshop for District 3

Zoe Foundotos, CEC 3 High School Admissions Committee Chair introduced the idea of expanding the successful District 3 High School Admissions Workshop for seventh grade families to sixth grade families. The Workshop for sixth grade families would run separately and be catered to their needs. The forum would be run in the spring. The committee member widely supported this idea.