

# *Citywide Council on Special Education*

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April 2, 2012

## BY EMAIL

Deputy Chancellor Laura Rodriguez  
Division of Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners  
52 Chambers Street – Room 220  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Deputy Chancellor Rodriguez:

Parents and other concerned stakeholders are bringing multiple concerns to the CCSE regarding the citywide roll out of the special education reform. We encourage the Department to continue to engage our Council in considering communications on key policies of the reform; to schools, parents and other concerned stakeholders.

To keep our ongoing dialogue informative and productive, we are requesting the Department of Education provide answers to the following questions in writing by Friday April 20<sup>th</sup> prior to our scheduled CEC briefing:

*When will the DOE communicate to schools that federal IDEA and procedural safeguards have not changed so they will consider this in their efforts to meet the needs of students with disabilities?*

*What steps will the DOE take to correct communications to principals (ex. The Guide to Flexible Scheduling) so that they understand that the parents are to proactively participate in decision making as members of the IEP team prior to any consideration of programmatic changes? When will this be accomplished?*

*What training do paraprofessionals have and what additional supports will be integrated into classroom settings to support students with behavioral challenges? When will this be accomplished?*

*What training will general education teachers have to accommodate children with behavioral challenges? When will this be accomplished?*

*What is the timetable for the above training so that it occurs prior to the start of the school year? Who will provide it besides internal personnel?*

*What is the plan to ensure that all schools make PBIS/BIP implementation part of their school-wide professional development/training?*

*What policies will be enforced to monitor the progress of individual student IEP goals (not reporting schedule?) of students in the reform? Once IEP goals are met, how will parents be included in the decision-making process prior to adding or removing goals?*

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*How will the DOE monitor that school staff are developing IEP goals that consider present levels of performance for academic, developmental and functional needs and how will this be communicated to the parents?*

*What new process will be developed to make sure feeder schools introduce/transition the family and child to the receiving school? Will a transition booklet be developed informing parents of the new process? In other words, how will both schools and faculty work together to ensure smooth transition during the IEP planning process?*

*Why not publish best practices from phase one schools that have successfully transitioned articulating students so they can be shared with other schools?*

*What staffing changes have been made at the office of enrollment assisting families who have been turned away from their local schools over the past 2 years? What procedural safeguards have now been put in place to ensure that this will not happen again?*

*What are the parents' choices if they do not agree to change the IEP to meet school services and supports? How has this been communicated on a school level in each community?*

*How will the DOE ensure that the provision and monitoring of related services does not revert to a medical model focusing on deficiencies vs. capacity/strengths?*

*What will the DOE do different to guarantee that the communication to both parents and schools is consistent and embraces the integrity for reform goals and parent engagement?*

*What steps will the DOE take to provide schools with increased budgets to anticipate accommodating the needs of the incoming children without knowing who will be attending?*

As always, the members of the CCSE are available to advise. We look forward to continuing our dialogue to ensure the goals of the reform are implemented with integrity and lead to positive student learning outcomes.

Sincerely,

John T. Englert, Co-President  
Jaye Bea Smalley, Co-President  
Lori Podvesker, Vice President  
Lakisha Brooks, Secretary  
Ellen McHugh, P.A. Appointee  
Lucy Antoine  
Louise Bogue  
Kelly Graham  
Rebecca Ramos  
Alicia Williams