

SLT Meeting 5/9 with Superintendent Ramirez

Parent Representatives

Joy Waitkus/Co-Chair SLT – Elected Parent Rep
Jackie Cruz - PTO Co-President
Emily Hardy - Elected Parent Rep
Kelly Ceynowa - Elected Parent Rep

Staff Representatives

Christopher Jennings/Co-Chair SLT – UFT Chapter Leader
Emel Topbas-Mejia- Principal
Samantha Pastore – Health/PE Teacher IS
Amanda Burley - ENL Teacher
Marie Marricco - 5th Grade General Education Teacher

Additional Attendees:

- Superintendent Ramirez
- Audience members

Notes from our conversation with Mr. Ramirez:

Opening From Superintendent Ramirez:

- Role of the superintendent is to support the school in the implementation of the plan.
- Only our school will have an issue with this - others have lower enrollment or appropriate space
- Managing expectations - often he doesn't have information for us, but we will get the information he has
- NYC is a district to New York State
 - The District was asked to be at 20% compliance for this current year - meaning if 187 isn't in compliance specifically that is okay.
 - D6 is at 49% right now, so per the state we are ok
- We are okay for the current law but by September 2028 when we need to be in 100% implementation
- General idea is that PS 187 either gets more space - or we reduce our enrollment
- Solutions will come from PS/IS 187 Community brainstorming. It won't come from the district.

- The DOE is putting together a compliance plan for schools like 187 - how to make changes.

Funding

- The mandate is non-funded. The state is not giving extra money. The city is looking into providing some (small) amount of funding to support this.
- One thing we are looking into is how to repurpose space and human resources because 187 has space and funding problems.
- If not in compliance, the state might withhold about 156,000 a year for **contract for excellence** funding. (campaign for fiscal equity)
- When capping classes, we are going to have fewer students which means less funding, but more teachers. Mr. Ramirez “doesn’t know how it is going to play out.”
 - Mr Ramirez: To be clear - no one is being “kicked out” of PS/IS 187, and family priority still exists, but potentially moving forward a lottery would be in effect for seats
- Fair Student Funding Legislation
 - Superintendent Ramirez spoke against students in specialized schools getting more funding from the formula.
 - The Chancellor has said something about needing to revise it. Superintendent Ramirez is not sure what work is being done now.
 - FSF task force convened a couple of years ago with recommendations to change the weight system, specifically to change the formula in respect to Specialized High Schools. The recommendation did not get advanced. There are conversations to reconvene that task force.

Compliance

- Chapter 556 law: We were already in compliance, District wide.
- District not planning on having a district-wide compliance plan, because most schools have the conditions to meet the mandate
- Parents can continue to engage in conversations with the SLT and look for ways to make small steps towards compliance.
- Ideas:

- There is a room in this school that is not being utilized for instruction.
- Maximize human resources. Including the AP teaching
- How many teachers are not teaching a full program?
- Send an email to the super that currently we are at ## and we want to cap the enrollment.
 - This way if someone new comes to register who is zoned (or not) we cannot accept them
- Need an agreement with the chancellor, UFT and CSA, for the exemption to happen.
 - 187 would request it.
 - We will need to list what we have done to try to comply
 - One category for the exemption is space-
 1. Space
 2. Over enrolled students
 3. License area shortage
 4. Economic distress

Zoning

- Unlikely that rezoning will be reduced for 187, as people generally want to expand the zone.
- Zoning goes through the CEC

Location

- Co-Location?
 - Superintendent Ramires is “not at that bridge yet” He hasn't thought about it yet.
 - That could be a convo with the new superintendent. For next year we should continue business as usual and start discussions
 - The problem with space is that we are in Manhattan.
 - If the space is NOT DOE buildings, there are negotiations with the landlord.
 - Share ideas with the district office if that is a process we look into
- The other part of the issue is space. This building has been over-utilized for a LONG time. And it is impossible to reduce enrollment. Everyone zoned wants their kids here. We need to start identifying if there is space here for instruction that we aren't currently utilizing.
 - Action Item: we need the exact #s (ie: we need 5 classrooms) so the superintendent's office can negotiate on our behalf.

Potential Action Item: Start making small cutbacks in class size.

- Between k and 2 at least 5 families will move.
- As students leave the school, monitor the enrollment and cap the grade.
- Potentially in the future we should reduce from 4 to 3 Kindergarten classes. (Maybe for Fall 2025)

Questions from Parent Attendees:

Question: Will the NYCPS walk through options with these 2 schools?

Superintendent Ramirez: A good idea. The last evaluation was 2017 of this building, for space utilization.

Q: How many are admitted from out of zone?

S.R.: The answer is 0. We don't check addresses. What % of kids here are zoned? To him, 100%

Q: Would it help to not only lower the cap for K but also 6?

S.R.: if we have enough to be in compliance, then we can cap.

- It becomes an issue- If you cap it you can't accept anyone
- You receive an email that enrollment wants to give us kids, right away we go to the superintendent's office, and they can contact enrollment and tell them to find another placement for families.
- Capping has to happen in the current year.

Q: Middle school choice zone: 155 to 220 Street. In capping 6th grade would that not trigger a zoning restructure?

If the IS and ES have the same name, the kids have a right to be there. (5→ 6)

Q: How to lower the T:S ratio for current students?

S.R.: It can't happen. I believe that you need to continue thinking about this. Don't get frustrated because of the current state. We still have next year to start strategizing and ideas will come up.

- Involve as many parents as we can. In a PA meeting, engage parents, but don't recycle the problem, look for potential solutions.

Q: What support can be done for this year? Can the superintendent give us funding?

S.R.: If funding is released from the DOE? Then yes the superintendent can

- What we have to do: Keep the superintendent informed - don't pretend the superintendent knows.

Closing Remarks:

- Principal Topbas-Mejia: There is a sense of urgency, but also reassurance that it doesn't need to be in place for September 2024.
- Superintendent Ramirez: Wants to thank everyone from the bottom of his heart, District 6 has and always will be special to him. He has received so much support and has seen so much care for the students here. It has been "quite a ride" but lots of progress has been made.