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Resolution 4 (SY21-22)

Resolution calling for the DOE to suspend G&T reform until Mayor-elect Adams takes office and delineating some recommended principles for future G&T programming

Sponsor: Stephen Stowe, Vito LaBella

Resolution passed 11/9/21 (8 Yes, 0 No, 1 Excused, 2 Vacancies)

WHEREAS, the Community Education Council for District 20 unanimously passed on September 14, 2021, a Resolution Calling for Gifted & Talented (G&T) Parent Engagement which resolved the following:

- THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that CEC D20 calls on the Mayor and Department of Education (DOE) to fulfill their promises and start family engagement without delay and in good faith leave flexibility in their plans for Citywide and District G&T Programs that incorporate family input for any future program intended to meet the educational needs of accelerated NYC student learners
- THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that CEC D20 urges Chancellor Porter and other DOE officials, to meet with the CEC D20 in an Open Public Meeting to provide a forum for District 20 G&T community input prior to any announced changes to District G&T Programs.

WHEREAS, the DOE announced on October 8th that the existing G&T program would be ended and replaced with Brilliant NYC. There were no District 20 family engagement or community forums prior to this announcement, thus failing to meet the requests outlined in our September 14 resolution.

WHEREAS subsequent to the October 8th announcement, the DOE has announced a series of parent engagement sessions to receive parent feedback on the proposed Brilliant NYC program. These sessions will be used to collect parent feedback which will then be incorporated into the design of the program.

WHEREAS it is now mid-November and a new Mayor will take office January 1st. Mayor-elect Adams has pledged to pursue his own G&T policies, including potentially maintaining all or parts of the existing G&T program.

WHEREAS there are no announced application procedures for the new Brilliant NYC program, placing yet another burden of uncertainty on families.

WHEREAS gifted students have distinct learning needs¹.

WHEREAS the “blueprint” for Brilliant NYC is described as a “framework for thinking about a child’s education” and includes many abstract, generalized concepts such as “seeing children for their strengths”, “rich learning experiences” and “real world projects”². There are almost no specific programmatic details. There is no specific evidence-based research cited in this blueprint despite

1. <http://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources/what-giftedness>
2. <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/programs/brilliant-nyc/the-brilliant-nyc-blueprint>

references to such throughout. Furthermore, the blueprint is demonstrably not a selective program designed to identify and meet the needs of gifted learners.

WHEREAS eliminating G&T programs is not the solution to underrepresentation of Black and Brown communities. Instead, the focus should be on the expansion of such programs as recognized by the State of New Jersey in a recently approved law entitled “Strengthening Gifted and Talented Education Act” which calls for the expansion of G&T identification³.

The Community Education Council for District 20 hereby resolves that:

1. For the School Year 2022-2023, the DOE abandons Brilliant NYC and announces a temporary admission criteria using either existing student data or a test which can be implemented in the spring and does not require creation of an extensive new program given the relatively short time frame until Mayor-elect Adams takes office.

2. The following practices be included in any future program for gifted learners:
 - Universal screening for all students at an early age. The age / grade could be determined. Parents could opt out. Students can test into the program in later years. Testing results should be compared to national, state and local norms.
 - Expand the program to currently underserved areas. Furthermore, planning should focus on offering programs within every District.
 - Reconsider identification procedures to ensure broader identification of gifted learners. Other factors such as grades could be included in the screening process but a test should be the most important factor. There is extensive written methodology available for improving assessments to meet the needs of diverse student bodies.
 - Accelerated learning should be the foundation of the program. Pull-out programming and Enrichment should be used to supplement and enhance the curriculum, but the focus should be on offering programming to gifted learners at their ability level.
 - Gifted students should be grouped with other gifted students. Differentiated instruction within the same classroom is more difficult, more resource-intensive and less efficient than grouping students of similar ability into the same classroom. However, pull-out programming, enrichment and extracurricular activities should include students of all academic levels.
 - Teachers should be trained in learning methods appropriate for gifted learners.

3. https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/A5000/4710_R1.HTM