

## Citywide Council on English Language Learners (CCELL)

Department of Education of the City of New York

**Teresa Arboleda**, *President*

*Council Members:*

**Antonieta Alarcon**

**Alma Fuentes**

**Bintou Fofana**

**Habatalla Ibrahim**

**Awatef Ibrahim**, *1st V.P.*

**Vanessa Leung**, *Rec. Secretary*

**Martha Arenas**, *Treasurer*

*Office of English Language Learners:* **Angelica Infante**, *Executive Director*

**Lissette Colon**, *Chief of Staff*

### Citywide Council on English Language Learners (CCELL) Resolution #13

#### Resolution calling on the Department of Education to implement a moratorium on school closure, phase-out and school co-location proposals

**WHEREAS**, the CCELL, established by NYS Education Law 2590-B, 5. (a) (i) – (iii) (the Law) with the power to advise and consent on any educational or instructional policy involving bilingual or English as a Second Language Programs, . . . and making recommendations, as appropriate, on how to improve the efficiency and delivery of such services; and

**WHEREAS**, the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP), in accordance with its statutory obligation to advise the Chancellor on matters of educational policy and student welfare, proposed a resolution calling on the NYC DOE to implement a moratorium on school closure, phase-out and school co-location proposals at the PEP meeting of March 11, 2013; and

**WHEREAS**, NYC DOE has issued Proposals for Significant Changes in School Utilization and Educational Impact Statements (EIS) for our schools that, upon PEP approval, dissolve schools, some with a proud history of achievements and neighborhood connections; and

**WHEREAS**, while the closing of a school may be necessary as a last resort, school closure appears to be the primary policy employed by the DOE to address schools with large numbers of students with significant educational needs, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and Special Education students; and

**WHEREAS**, the CCELL, by its letter of February 1, 2011 and resolution of May 3, 2011 on ELLs and School Closings/Opening/Co-locations, expressed its concerns and made recommendations regarding the high number of ELLs that are affected, and very possibly adversely impacted, by the planned closings/openings/co-locations of schools; and

**WHEREAS**, in testimony at PEP meetings, in connection with and in support of the above referenced letter and resolution, the CCELL expected the NYCDOE to establish an open and transparent process; to provide appropriate and adequate resources to support, inform and assist ELL parents and students, of programs being offered in new and nearby schools, in the appropriate languages; and to be updated periodically regarding continuation of services for ELLs in schools that are closing; and

**WHEREAS**, in hearings and meetings held subsequently, it appears that closing schools de-stabilizes thousands of students in primarily large, comprehensive high schools; and

**WHEREAS**, the policy of school closures affects disproportionately students of color, and communities affected by these policies in NYC have filed a Federal Title VI Civil Rights complaint with the U.S.

Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, citing the closing of schools and the criteria and methods for administering those actions as discriminatory toward low-income, minority communities; and

**WHEREAS**, charter schools were originally intended as pedagogical laboratories for innovation in teaching to better meet the needs of all our students, but particularly those at-risk, and to improve public schools by collaborating with public schools and sharing best practices with public schools; and

**WHEREAS**, it appears that many charter schools in the City today do not serve students at-risk; and

**WHEREAS**, it appears most charter schools have not expended strong efforts and resources to recruit ELLS and Special Education students; and

**WHEREAS**, many public school communities that are co-located with charter schools lose school space to the charter school; and now therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Citywide Council on English Language Learners supports a moratorium on all school closures, phase-outs and charter school co-locations and calls upon the NYCDOE to:

- Impose a moratorium on all school proposals until public presentations are made in every borough reflecting on how this method will raise student achievement in lieu of existing models.
- Conduct school-by-school transparent reviews of our current school improvement strategies to assess which measures and programs have been effective or are showing promise in raising student achievement, while improving the school environment; these transparent reviews should include all stakeholders.
- Examine school intervention plans that may be in place, bearing in mind those improvement strategies contemplate multiyear plans and that none of the schools may have exceeded the time allowed under the federal guidelines.
- Ensure that all struggling schools, whether or not they are undergoing federally specified reform plans, are given adequate support so that the students will not only graduate but receive the quality of education that will make them college- or career- ready.
- Provide a full accounting as well facilitate independent research of the educational outcomes of students remaining in previously phased out schools.
- Provide periodic updates regarding the continuation of services for ELLs in schools that have closed and/or are closing.
- Fully cooperate with any investigation of Title VI civil rights complaints as filed with US DOE Office of Civil Rights.

Approved: June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013