



Education Council Consortium (ECC)
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Resolution Calling for a Streamlined Process for Member Reimbursement
March 11, 2017

The Education Council Consortium (ECC) is a group of parents and community members who have been elected or appointed to serve on District and Citywide Community Education Councils, representing 1.1 million public school students, including children who are receiving special education services and who are English Language Learners. The ECC was formed to address issues that affect schools and communities throughout all the boroughs and meets regularly with the Chancellor to help shape, advice, provide feedback and comment on educational policies, visions and goals.

Whereas, the NY State Legislature by Chapter 91 of the Laws of 2002, Education Law 2590, significantly restructured the governance of New York City Public Schools, establishing district education councils effective June 30, 2003 and establishing citywide councils when it was amended in 2009; and

Whereas, members of the Citywide and Community Education Councils (collectively “the Councils”) serve without compensation; and

Whereas, duties as members of the Councils include meetings above and beyond the monthly meetings of the Council, including but not limited to meeting with representatives from the NYC Department of Education, Community School Districts, Parent-Teacher Associations, Community Boards, the Public Advocate, Borough Presidents and offices of various elected officials; and

Whereas, performing duties incur expenses, such as for transportation and childcare; and

Whereas, the Department of Education’s fiscal policy prohibits reimbursement of expenses incurred outside of the City, such as for attending a conference, even if such amounts are within the monthly allotment; and

Whereas, because of this restriction, members of the Councils are unable to take advantage of many professional development opportunities or have to pay for them out of their own pocket; and

Whereas, the Councils are each provided with \$20,000 annually from the City as its operating budget, that includes reimbursement for members, and which has not been raised for over 13 years; and

Whereas, the \$20,000 provided to the councils is not enough for functioning councils with full membership to adequately perform their roles and responsibilities; and

Whereas, there is a maximum monthly expenditure amount for members of the Councils of \$125 per month for members and \$200 for the President, which sometimes does not adequately provide for parents with high child care expenses to fulfill their roles and responsibilities, often determining whether or not they will be able to properly serve; and

Whereas, to receive reimbursement for even the smallest of expenses (e.g., a 5-minute taxi ride) requires supporting documentation in the form of a meeting agenda, sign-in sheet or email communication between the parties; and

Whereas, not all meetings attended by members of the Councils are “formal” meetings with agendas, sign-in sheets or email communication; and

Whereas, reimbursement requests have a time limit of a few months beyond which members are not reimbursed for legitimate expenses; and

Whereas, while the City imposes a highly bureaucratic oversight on the comparatively small amount of expenses incurred by volunteers on the Councils, the City appears more lax with its multi-million dollar contracts; and

Whereas, many members of the Councils find the requirements for documentation beyond receipts and reimbursement forms insulting and view such requirements as evidence for lack of trust and disrespect for their professionalism and commitment; and therefore be it

Resolved, that the Education Council Consortium (ECC) requests the Department of Education to streamline the reimbursement process so that:

- Members need only to submit receipts and the reimbursement forms;
- Members can request reimbursement for any expenses incurred during the current fiscal year so long as the requests are submitted before June 30th;
- Reimbursement requests approved by either the President or the Treasurer should be honored;
- By a vote of the Council, professional development expenses be reimbursed regardless of where such expenses were incurred;
- Out-of-the-City expenses approved by the Council be reimbursed at the full amount if the member requesting reimbursement has unspent funds carried over from prior months; and be it further

Resolved, that the councils’ budget be raised to \$25,000 per year, the members’ reimbursement raised to a maximum of \$150 a month and the presidents’ maximum reimbursement raised to \$225 a month; and be it further

Resolved, that the ECC expects the Department of Education, and other involved agencies, to recognize the sacrifices of parents dedicated to provide solutions to the problems affecting our school system and be respectful of the commitment and professionalism of volunteers who serve on the Councils when developing fiscal policies.