

## BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

### Minutes of the Education and Libraries & Cultural Affairs Committees Meeting Held on October 25, 2011 at the Kingsbridge Library, 291 West 231 Street

#### PRESENT

Sylvia Alexander  
Robert Abbott  
Rita Pochter Lowe  
Lamont Parker  
Robert Press  
Julie Reyes  
I. William Stone  
Gregory Adames  
Lauren Carmona  
Miawling Lam  
Jane Fisher  
Andrea Lipinski

#### AFFILIATION

CB8, Education Cmte Chair  
CB8, Libraries & Cultural Affairs Cmte Chair  
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Education Committee Member  
PS 81 rep.  
Riverdale Review  
NYPL, Network Manager  
NYPL, Young Adult Librarian

The meeting began at 7:00 PM.

The chair of the Education committee thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and then introduced the topic for the meeting and the guest speakers. The topic was: "Literacy-Computers vs Books."

Jane Fisher, the NYPL Network Manager, gave an overview of the studies and statistics on the topic.

Essentially there is a significant decline in the time that children and young adults spend with books. There is less reading and more time spent on electronic entertainment. The surveys suggest that the change in interest in reading is more so with boys than girls. The trend is clear over the last two decades although recent studies reflect a small rebound. Notwithstanding the situation, Ms. Fisher said there is "no going back" and that the NYPL fully recognizes the situation. So what should parents do? There were several suggestions; set limits on the time a youngster is allowed to use digital devices; allow them to choose their own books at the library; and demonstrate, by example, that reading is important. If the parent is a reader then there is greater probability that the child will be a reader.

Andrea Lipinski, the Young Adults librarian at Kingsbridge, then presented two views on the subject. First that the librarians are fully engaged in the use of digital resources (e-books, Twitter, Facebook, and blogs) in selecting good books, monitoring favorite authors and publishers, and sharing opinions and reviews. Second, that the Children's librarians and Young Adult librarians spend a lot of time identifying the best books for their age groups. Andrea then demonstrated a "book talk". She held up a novel and gave an overview of the story in a compelling fashion. When she gives book talks at the local public schools she has students anxious to borrow the books that she features. She doesn't expect a parent to prepare book talks, but parents should engage the branch librarians to identify the best books that take advantage of a child's interest area (fantasy, mystery, action, etc). The book cover may not be attractive enough for a young reader to select a very good book. Many students who have met Ms. Lipinski in their school will approach her at the branch library for suggestions long after the initial school presentation. Librarians can also suggest websites and other sources that parents may access to encourage their children to read.

The committee thanked the two NYPL guests and engaged in a brief question and answer session prior to concluding the presentation.

Following the presentation, the regular meeting continued.

Minutes of the September 27, 2011 meeting of the Education committee were discussed and approved. Several announcements and event flyers were distributed and discussed by committee members:

1. October 30, 2011-The Children's Environmental Health Forum-Hebrew Institute-10:00 am-12:00pm. Preventing exposure to toxins.
2. New UFT supported program, "Be Brave against Bullying" contact #212-709-3222.
3. Jacobi Medical Center-Asthma & Allergy Center for Children-Coordinator-Brenda Lopez, contact #718-975-6467 Asthma study looking for participants.
4. Reported in media-46% graduate from high schools but only 21% qualify for college courses, other students enter remedial classes in college.

#### Old Business

Members of the committee were reminded that all official communication with agency counterparts, including the DOE, must be channeled through the committee chair person and the community board office. A recent tour of Riverdale Kingsbridge Academy by the committee chair was very well received. The Principal of RKA indicated a willingness to come to the January or February meeting of the committee. There was a warm response to this information.

#### New Business

The chair of the Libraries & Cultural Affairs committee referred to NYPL's resources for teachers and students. There is a current pilot program to consolidate the school library catalogs with the NYPL catalog. A future joint meeting of the two committees, with a guest from NYPL, could highlight these resources. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 with thanks to the branch library for hosting the meeting. The Education Committee Chair thanks Robert Abbott for taking the minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia Alexander, Chair,  
Education Committee  
Robert Abbott, Chair,  
Libraries & Cultural Affairs Committee