

Head Start Sponsoring Board Council of The City of New York

1120 Avenue of the Americas, 4th floor - Suite 4124

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Serving the Head Start Community Since 1981

www.headstartsbdc.org

Meeting summary for Andre Lake's Personal Meeting Room (01/12/2026)

Quick recap

The meeting began with introductions from various early childhood education agencies and focused on updates and discussions regarding the Early Special Education Grant, the Management Welfare Fund, and pension fund matters. Barbara Edmonds, representing the union, provided an update on the Early Special Education Grant and announced a new initiative to get non-certified staff certified as teachers, partnering with CUNY. The Management Welfare Fund's future was discussed, with Cynthia Cummings presenting options to either continue the current plan, change it to a flexible spending plan, or increase contributions. The group also addressed concerns about the implications of the DOE's transition out of Head Start funding, including potential impacts on pensions and benefits. Andre emphasized the need for clarity on compounded increases and agreed to provide more information on the obligations for these payments. The conversation ended with discussions on the \$1,000 sign-on bonus and the importance of ensuring staff receive their payments.

Next Steps

Randy: Send the pension fund administrative guide to Andre for posting on the sponsor and board councils website and/or distribution via email blast.

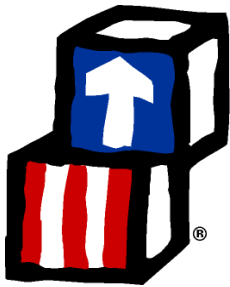
Andre: Send out a survey to managers within one to two weeks to gauge interest in options for the future of the Management Welfare Fund (e.g., increase contribution, change to flexible spending, let fund deplete).

Andre: Follow up with Dr. BAFUNZO's agency regarding the status of the \$1,000 sign-on bonus payment and confirm whether funds have been received.

Andre: Send Tanya (and other interested parties) the executed copy of the summer payment MOU once available, and/or provide guidance on the summer bonus distribution.

Andre/Dr. Brown: Add discussion of summer payment eligibility and required documentation to the agenda for the upcoming meeting with the DOE.

Andre/Dr. Brown: Seek clarity from the DOE on the calculation and payment of compounded increases (COLA) and communicate the agreed-upon interpretation to directors and the union.



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Andre: Calculate and send to Tanya the correct percentage of increase owed to members effective February 1, 2025, based on the CBA.

Andre: Send out guidance and/or clarification to programs regarding the proper payment of the \$1,000 sign-on bonus (must be by check/cash, not gift cards).

Andre: Follow up with the DOE for an update on which programs have received summer funding.

Andre: Continue to pursue the FOIL request for transparency regarding which agencies will receive direct funding from the feds.

Cynthia Cummings: Encourage all managers to ensure each employee has an account with Principal and reinforce this with HR departments.

Cynthia Cummings: Remind agencies to provide required life insurance forms to staff who sever employment within 30 days of departure.

DC37 Teacher Certification Initiatives

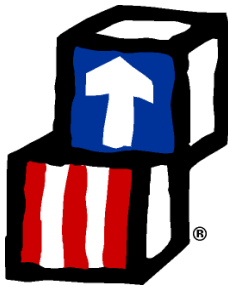
Barbara Edmonds, representing DC37 Local 95, discussed two key initiatives: the Early Special Education Grant, which has completed its first year and will enter its second year with plans to expand training to more centers, and a new program to certify non-certified DC37 staff as teachers in partnership with CUNY. The union will conduct a survey to assess interest in the teacher certification program, which will be tuition-free through scholarships. Andre announced that Barbara may be leaving her role as she plans to retire, though she will continue to support the initiatives as a volunteer.

Community Parents Program Success Update

The meeting began with expressions of gratitude to Barbara for her contributions, followed by Cynthia discussing the success of the Community Parents program, which provided support to teachers, particularly for children affected by COVID-19. Randy addressed the importance of timely contributions to the welfare and pension funds, emphasizing the need to maintain benefits. He also mentioned an administrative guide for pension procedures and planned to share it with Andre for distribution. The conversation ended with plans to continue with the agenda and address any further questions via email.

Employee Pension and Benefits Overview

Cynthia Cummings discussed the importance of employees establishing accounts on Principal.com for pension-related information and requested managers to ensure their staff have access. Andre emphasized the need for staff to understand the agencies they work for to avoid confusion when collecting pensions. Cynthia also mentioned the requirement to offer life insurance options to employees during their last 30 days of employment. Additionally, she provided background on the Management Welfare Fund, which was established to cover un-reimbursable expenses for managers, with a collection rate of \$25 per month.



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Management Welfare Fund Sustainability Options

The meeting discussed the financial sustainability of the Management Welfare Fund, which is facing depletion in 3 years due to a decrease in participating managers from a peak of 300 to about 140. Cynthia Cummings presented two options: continuing the current plan with potential contribution increases, or transitioning to a flexible spending plan where contributions would be matched dollar-for-dollar and expenses reimbursed at double the amount. Randy provided historical context about the fund's origins and previous benefit changes, while Jeanette raised the possibility of increasing monthly contributions as an alternative option.

Management Fund Future Options

The meeting focused on discussing the management fund and its future options, including continuing to spend it down, changing the plan description for a contribution match, or increasing the benefit amount. Cynthia Cummings outlined three main options for the fund's future, while Andre and Dr. Brown discussed the implications of the DOE's transitional contracts ending, particularly for pension benefits. The union and Andre are currently meeting to address the uncertain futures of delegate agencies no longer funded by DOE, with plans to ensure pension continuity for affected employees.

Head Start Pension Funding Scenarios

The meeting focused on discussing the potential impact of changes to Head Start programs on pension funding and membership. Andre explained the different scenarios for delegates and programs, including direct funding and uncertainty for some staff. Tanya expressed concerns about future membership retention and cost increases. Andre clarified that management cannot directly organize union members, but they can run projections and present options based on the volatility in the system. Cynthia Cummings explained that actuaries cannot provide specific numbers until they know how many people will leave, which will likely happen over a two-year period.

Head Start Program Transition Updates

The meeting focused on the transition of Head Start programs in New York City, with Cynthia Cummings explaining that while multiple agencies will receive direct funding, the Head Start Sponsoring Board Council remains responsible for benefit delivery. Andre and Dr. Brown discussed the uncertainty around program extensions beyond June 30, 2026, with Dr. Brown clarifying that there's no guarantee of extensions after that date. The group also addressed the \$1,000 sign-on bonus for union members, which must be paid in cash rather than gift cards, and discussed the need for clarity on compounded increases as outlined in the CBA. Tanya requested guidance on summer payment distribution criteria, and Andre agreed to follow up with the necessary documentation.