



**Calendar Meeting - Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Approved on 6/19/2018 at a Business Meeting**

Date: 05/17/2018

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: P.S. 10, 511 7th Avenue, Auditorium

Agenda

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Welcome - President Camille Casaretti
3. Approval of Minutes from April 26
4. D15 Superintendent Report - Anita Skop
5. Introduction to Today's Conversation - Lili Velez
6. Current Initiatives in D15 and Citywide
 - a. Citywide Efforts - Mark Bisard
 - b. D15 Diversity Plan - Neal Zephyrin
 - c. Diversity Committees and District Congress - Antonia Ferraro, Anita Skop
7. Open Comment Period Including Directed Questions from CEC
8. Thank Yous and Adjournment

Call to Order 6:36 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Present:

Camille Casaretti, President

Kathy Park Price, Co-Vice President

Scott Powell, Co-Vice President

Neal Zephyrin, Secretary

Charles Star, Treasurer

Nicole Brier

Mark Bisard

Antonia Ferraro

Lili Velez

Late:

Yanfeng Zhang

Absent:

Elena Romero - Excused



Invited Guests:

D15 Superintendent Anita Skop

ImageThink Co-Founder & CEO, Nora Herting

2. Welcome - President Camille Casaretti

- Chancellor's Town Hall on June 13 at PS 24. Questions can be sent ahead of time to cec15@schools.nyc.gov
- CEC15 represents Parents Voice. If parents have issues with their schools please let CEC15 know. The council can't solve problems but can help parents contact the right people.

3. Approval of Minutes from April 26

- One change was suggested.

Motion to approve minutes from April 26 with suggested changes - Scott Powell

2nd motion to approve minutes from April 26 with suggested changes - Charles Star

Minutes approved by all 9 members present.

4. D15 Superintendent Report - Anita Skop

- Excited to introduce PS 896's (St. Agatha's) Project Leader Ruth Rodriguez-Rivera. Her title is Project Leader because the school is not open yet, but once it opens she will become the Principal.
- Ruth Rodriguez-Rivera:
 - Excited to start work at PS 896
 - September will mark her 20th year as an educator.
- The Police Precinct on 4th Avenue (between 42nd and 43rd Streets) will become part of PS 516. The school will get another 300 seats.
- PS 896 will grow. The closed C-Town supermarket has been demolished. A new building will be built to accommodate PS 896's upper grades. The school will have approximately 600 seats between both sites.
- The old Victory Outreach Church on 36th and 5th will also be turned into a new school building as well. It will be a standalone K-5 school with 404 seats.
- Visited the temporary library in Sunset Park at CB7 site. It's a gorgeous site with a vending machine that allows people to borrow a laptop for 2 hours. The children's section has 2 desktops for toddlers and bigger computers for older kids. The new library space will be in use for about 2 years while the current space is being rebuilt to house a new 21,000-foot library and 49 units of affordable housing with 9 designated for victims of domestic violence.
- Congrats to PS 130! Their Math League came in 1st place in the New York State Elementary Math League.
- MS 839 is now officially an Outward Bound School.
- HS 656 is officially designated as Screened Arts High School with an enhanced allocation of funding.
- Thank you to CEC15 for the wonderful work on the District Science Fair. Looking forward to partnering again next year and also including a Visual Arts Gallery Show.



5. Introduction to Today's Conversation - Lili Velez

- There will be a presentation on current initiatives, followed by an extended comment period where CEC15 wants to hear from everyone.
- We are all here because as a community we understand that we can not ignore issues of equity, diversity and inclusion in our schools.
- CEC15 plays a role in amplifying parent voice. The comments shared today sit at the heart of the work we, as a District, are trying to do and it is critical at this time that we provide the space to put these stories at the center of our efforts.
- To begin to understand these issues Nora Herting from ImageThink has donated her services. She will draw stories to present to the DOE. No names will be included.
- Today CEC15 will not answer any questions but listen to everyone who shares their story.

6. Current Initiatives in D15 and Citywide

a. Citywide Efforts - Mark Bisard

- Power of diversity should be viewed as strength not weakness.
- The [City is investing \\$23 million](#) for anti bias training of city educators. Will offer training for DOE staff members by 2021-2022. The training will be conducted by outside trainers.
- To download the [Diversity Plan](#) for New York City public schools please visit schools.nyc.gov/diversity. It is available in other languages as well.

b. D15 Diversity Plan - Neal Zephyrin

- People of color moved up north to escape the Jim Crow laws. Looking for better opportunities.
- Public housing was offered to low income and middle class factory workers, but it was not available to all people.
- Developers would not get funding if they sold to people of color.
- Even working in the same factories people were segregated.
- FHA had a policy not to sell to people of color.
- The Civil Rights Act of 1968, known as the Fair Housing Act, made it illegal to discriminate against people of color.
- A Civil Rights Project - UCLA [article](#), published on 3/26/14, stated that New York State has the most segregated schools in the country.
- Segregation was intentional, integration must be intentional also.
- DOE taking a proactive approach to bringing more equity to NYC public schools. DOE is working with WXY, Border Crossers and D15 community to develop the D15 Diversity Plan by the end of the school year. It is basically an attempt to raise the inequity in middle schools.
- D15 Diversity Plan has had 3 public workshops. The 1st workshop introduced the planning process, discussion of how our public schools got to this point. The 2nd workshop gathered public feedback. The 3rd workshop presented the community with recommendations. There will be a 4th public workshop in June and there might be another one in July where a final plan will be presented to the community.

c. Diversity Committees and District Congress - Antonia Ferraro, D15 Superintendent Anita Skop



CEC15 Member Antonia Ferraro:

- Many schools in D15 have had diversity committees. Some functioned as PTA committees, while others were organized through the SLT.
- Diversity Committees provide a platform to:
 - a. Discuss and respond to issues of race, identity, multiculturalism and class that affect the school community.
 - b. Support diversity-oriented professional development.
 - c. Support administrative efforts to increase the number of faculty from under-represented backgrounds.
 - d. Initiate and support efforts to create diversity-oriented curriculum and extracurricular activities.
- Early exposure to diversity creates socially conscious citizens. But many of our schools are too segregated to accomplish this kind of learning.
- Diversity Committees collaborate with the administration to host discussions within the community through:
 - a. Workshops
 - b. Providing professional development.
 - c. Funding, developing and/or implementing diversity-oriented curriculum to be utilized in the classroom.
 - d. Facilitating school-wide events, activities, and celebrations around diversity-oriented topics.
 - e. Assisting in the recruitment of faculty from under-represented backgrounds.
- D15 is formally instituting Diversity Committees by providing structure and guidance on how these groups can function to improve diversity, equity and inclusion.

D15 Superintendent Anita Skop:

- Several months ago she mandated all schools to set-up Diversity Committees with staff and parents.
- Integration is not by the numbers, it's by interaction - what people need, what kids need, what needs to be done to bring people together in schools in elementary and middle school level, which are very segregated.
- She and her team have attended a 2-day session with the State for the Title 1 Integration Grant and will be attending 2 more days in Albany on June 28 and 29.
- All schools have established an SLT Diversity Team. One member from each committee will join the Diversity Congress to represent their school.
- The first Diversity Congress is meeting on May 31, 2018. This meeting is not open to the public.
- Every team in the district will be trained by Border Crossers on June 14, 19, 21.
- Teachers are being selected for the summer work on curriculum enhancement.
- All superintendents have received Implicit Bias Training at the DOE level. This is part of the Mayor's Initiative.



- Asking 2 or 3 parents to train for anti-bully training to help with bullying in schools initiative. They will then turn key their training by giving a parent workshop at their school. They will be trained and given workshop materials to share by WEDIKO which runs after school programs in D15.
- One high school student from each school will represent their school in the congress level.
- She believes in this. Wants this to happen and will do everything she can to make it happen.

7. Open Comment Period Including Directed Questions from CEC

- CEC15 Co-Vice President shared some ground rules for the comment section of the meeting:
 - Comments should be 2 minutes or less
 - Listen actively
 - No interrupting, no yelling, and no personal attacks.
 - Criticize ideas, not individuals.
 - Do not use personal names.
 - No debating, no disruption, no derogatory or inflammatory language
 - Wait until everyone else has had a chance to speak before speaking a 2nd time.
 - If a speaker does not abide by these rules, they will be asked to give up the microphone by a CEC member.

Highlighted comments of the night:

- D15 Parent, child in elementary school - Diversity is more than one word. Education is key. Many adults do not know true American History. Parents must ask themselves “who am I? What are my biases?” Teachers must ask themselves those questions as well. Children are a reflection of parents. Kids pick up everything you say. Read an [article](#) on Tolerance.org, issue 54, fall 2016, about how when there are issues with black and brown students nothing happens. Silence speaks volumes. Educate yourself, ask your friends uncomfortable questions. She has a rule: If we can't talk about race in your home, my son will not come to your home.
- D15 Parent, child in 3rd grade - No diversity committee at her school, but there was a Border Crossers' meeting in April. What she loves about her school is that it's moving towards diversity. It is important to her that her son goes to a school that's integrated. Diversity is a difficult thing to talk about.
- D15 Parent, child in elementary school - Does not want her children to feel the shame she felt growing up. African Americans don't talk about the south Jim Crow era. This is her first meeting, looking forward to attending more.
- D13 Parent, child in elementary school - Her child's school is a big lottery school. A very diverse school. She is grateful for the school's leadership. Due to pressures from the standardized tests people of color are pulling their kids out of the school because there's no one to rally for them. If their child is not on target, parents feel their child is not getting what they need and take their children to a school where their child will be valued.
- Pre-K Teacher - Just started grad school. Had the opportunity to learn multicultural education in the Diversity Committee in her school. People overlook multicultural education in Pre-K because they're too young, but we can't let them go up to the next grade with of an idea of something that is not true.



It's not about teaching languages, it's about teaching them about other cultures. Address issue of power and privilege, of children who struggle with stereotypes.

- D15 Parent, 2 children in elementary school - She had different experiences with her sons at their school. Older son had a great experience, but her younger son has been affected by some situations. Two white boys told her son that they did not want to play with him because his skin looks like "poop". One of the boys' parents apologized while the other boy's parents have not. Visited a middle school, and while there a student made a derogatory comment about a classmate's race.
- D15 & D75 Parent, 1 child in elementary school - Helped her child's school put a proposal (with 2 other elementary schools) in the Participatory Budget: An outreach plan for elementary school diversity. The idea was to create an outreach plan so schools can learn from each other and get the support they need to be integrated schools.
- D15 Parent, child in elementary school - Her child's school is amazing, it's an inclusive school. She understands where everyone is coming from and we should all continue to work together.
- D15 Parent, child in elementary school - She's part of her school's Diversity Committee. She's excited about what's being done and will be done. She has helped create a collection of books that was supported by the PTA to make the school's library more diverse. Books impact children, children should feel represented in the books in their school's library. There are books about diverse cultures, backgrounds, many books to help children feel that they belong.
- D15 Parent, child in elementary school - He's disappointed in Sunset Park because there is no Diversity Committee. What does diversity mean? We need to value our own community. The behavior by some white parents is what causes this segregation. This is the conversation that needs to happen in the schools.
- D15 Parent, child in elementary school - Diversity committee member. Many families come to her child's school because it looks nice, but that's on the surface. Her school has offered parent workshops to talk about race, they role play, talk about how important it's for children to have these conversations, they're not too young. The school principal is very supportive.
- D15 Parent, 2 children in elementary school - Shout out to Diversity Committee members, they're the unsung heroes. She has gone through the middle school process this year. This is an opportunity to make some changes. Middle schools are intentionally segregated by students' abilities but it's racially charge. We have a chance to make our schools fully integrated, especially at the middle school level.
- D15 Parent, 1 child in middle school and 1 child in high school in Manhattan - She became involved with diversity at her school because it was very confusing for her, and she has learned a lot, but she wants to know why only middle school. Her youngest child will start Pre-K next year and she will start over with elementary school, if the problem is fixed only in middle school, yes, she will get a rest during those years, but then go back to the same problem segregation in high school. Let's not put a bandaid in the middle. There should be a diversity initiative from Pre-K to high school. She wants to be a voice for her community, represent her Hispanic community. Let's go deeper with the administration, it will make a big difference when it comes to diversity.
- D15 Parent, children in elementary and middle schools - She wants to call on white people like her to start putting measures to treat all children the same. We need a districtwide policy that puts all families in the same school. Let's not protect a system that protects a certain group of kids.



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15

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- D15 Teacher, elementary school - Her school has a plan that all children have school supplies. All children start the school year with the same supplies. She teaches an ICT classroom. She's light skin and her co-teacher is dark skin, this help children see that people of different backgrounds can work together. Little choices she makes as a teacher really matter. One of her students who recently arrived from China told her she can't be a principal because she's not brown. She was excited about that because the it's a positive image that people of color can be school principals.
- D15 Parent, child in elementary school - She feels fortunate with the leadership at child's school. Someone asked his son about slavery and he gave a whole speech about the subject. She is very with with the education her child has received. Training does not change practice. Teachers need education on history.
- D15 Parent, CEC15 council member, 2 children in elementary school - She hopes diversity is not just about race. It's very hard to be diverse when your community is predominantly one race. Go to PTA meetings, participate in school events. Leadership is very important. Our kids are our treasure, we bring our treasure to school.
- D15 Principal, elementary school - September makes her 20th year as an educator but this November makes 11th year as a mother. She looked for a school that has a diverse community for her child. Work about perception and bias has not been done. The school her son attends has a diverse community but her son was still made fun of, by kids of his own race, because of how he looked and what he was wearing. We are living in a broken society. Teach children to rebound with resilience when they're hurt. How do we support our children who are experiencing the brokenness of the Latin community?
- D15 Parent, children in middle and high schools - Years ago, she became very involved with her children's schools and joined diversity programs. Her child was bullied and she told him to not pay any mind, but she knew she had to fight for her kids. One of her sons is disabled and one kid made some bad remarks about his facial features. When she complained about it to a school staff, she was told he has special needs because he's diabetic, but she told this staff member that her child is disabled, he has special needs but he is not rude, having special needs is not an excuse. Hispanic parents need to speak up. Many teachers say they will speak to the offending student but sometimes we don't get a follow up. Diversity workshops are complicated because of the wording being used. It's hard to understand the workshop when many of the parents did not even finish middle school.
- D15 Parent, CEC15 council member, child in elementary school - It is important to get feedback on how teachers and administrators can help. During a PTA event she felt discouraged when she brought an issue up and felt excluded. PTAs should have protocols. They are the gatekeepers, they're part of the machinery too.
- D13 Parent, child in elementary school - Programs at her child's school are very segregated. The dual language program is very selective, the G&T program is as well. There are 2 after school programs, one that's free and one that is not which causes segregation there as well. Children in the school do not spend enough time with children of different background.
- D15 Principal, elementary school - She makes sure that everything they do in the school is very inclusive. Parents came to her and told her they needed a diversity committee in the school. She's glad she listened because the committee has been doing great things for the school.



- D15 Parent, CEC15 council member, children in elementary and middle schools - Schools should not have Scholastic Book fairs as a fundraising. Kids cry because they don't have enough money to purchase those expensive books. She asked her child's school to stop having them because of this issue. They now make more money selling \$1 used books donated by parents at the school.
- D15 Superintendent Anita Skop - When thinking about doing a giant fundraiser at a school it's important to think about the parents that can't provide money to their children for expensive events, and also think about parents who are excluded because they can't afford to bid a lot of money on something. They shouldn't feel like the poorest people at the event.
- D15 Parent, CEC15 council member, children in elementary school - There are 2 schools in D15 that are separated by maybe 5 blocks. One school is 95% white while the other one is 95% kids of color. The PTA of the first school has raised a lot of money while the other school is a Title 1 school. We should keep an eye on the outcome. Make sure numbers move.
- D15 Parent, child in elementary school - Schools need to be really committed to diversity. Diversity means different things to different people. To her it means black people. Seeing more black people in a school is diversity to her.
- D15 Parent, CEC15 council member, child in elementary school - We have talked about things that have been done by the administration. If those systems in place do not work for parents it does not mean the end of it. Parents should take the initiative with other like minded parents. Even when parents feel locked they can create a path. There are places beyond the school if parents want to feel heard.
- D15 Parent, child in elementary school - Parents should take time to spend time with other parents outside of school. They should go to parties, playdates, pizza party. We can point fingers but we are responsible too. We're all in the same page. We are the voice. We all feel diversity is important and it starts with us.

8. Thank Yous and Adjournment

Motion to adjourn meeting - Charles Star

2nd motion to adjourn meeting - Lili Velez

Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:57 p.m.

- Minutes submitted by Francisca Andino, Administrative Assistant