



**Special Session Meeting: Specialized High Schools Diversification Proposal
Approved on 02/12/2019 at a Business Meeting**

Date: 01/16/2019

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: M.S. 51, 350 5th Avenue - Auditorium

Agenda (as publicly posted):

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Presidents' Welcome - Camille Casaretti, CEC15 President and Celia Green, CCHS President
3. Superintendent's Welcome - Anita Skop, D15 Superintendent
4. Mayor's Proposal to Improve Diversity at Specialized High Schools Presentation - Nadiya Chadha, Director, Enrollment Research Policy, DOE's Office of Student Enrollment
5. Questions from CEC15, CCHS and Elected Officials
6. Public Comments
7. Adjournment

For Public Comments:

- You must sign in on the Speaker Sign-In Sheet to make a Public Comment.
- Check off the box for Pro or Con based on your comment.
- Depending on the quantity of requests to speak you will have between 60 and 90 seconds to state your comment.
- Prepare your statement in advance on a comment card and place it in the collection box after you speak.
- Sit close to the aisle to simplify your access to the queue.

Rules of Decorum:

While this is a public meeting, we want to make sure that this space supports our D15 community.

- Comments should be less than 2 minutes.
- Listen actively and respectfully.
- No interrupting, no yelling, and no personal attacks.
- Criticize ideas, not individuals. Do not use any personal names.
- Avoid profane, speculative or inflammatory language.
- Join the line when your name is called and wait for a CEC member to acknowledge you at the microphone.
- If a speaker does not abide by these rules, they will be asked to sit down.



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15

131 Livingston Street, Room 301, Brooklyn, New York 11201

CEC15@schools.nyc.gov | tel. 718-935-4267 | facebook.com/CECD15 | CECD15.org

Call to Order at 6:35 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Present:

Camille Casaretti, President
Elena Romero, Co-Vice President 1/BP Appointee
Kathy Park Price, Co-Vice President 2
Antonia Ferraro, Secretary
Lili Velez, Parliamentarian
Nicole Brier, IEP Representative
Mark Bisard, Member
Neal Zephyrin, BP Appointee
Yanfeng Zhang, ELL Representative
Leela Gebo, Student Member

Late:

Charles Star, Treasurer

Absent:

Scott Powell, Member

Guests in Attendance:

Anita Skop, D15 Superintendent
Nadiya Chadha, Director, Enrollment Research Policy, Office of Student Enrollment
Sarah Kleinhandler, Senior Executive Director, Office of Student Enrollment
Richard Guevara, Parent Leadership Liaison, Division of Community Empowerment, Partnerships and Communications
Brad Lander, Council Member for the 39th District of the New York City Council
Vicki Sell, Education Liaison, Office of Council Member Brad Lander
Nan Blackshear, Community Affairs Director, Office of the Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams
Rivka Gross, Community Liaison, Office of Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon
Oscar Jonas, Community Liaison, Office of State Senator Velmanette Montgomery
Socheatta Meng, Chief of Staff and Scheduling, Office of Council Member Carlos Menchaca
Karen Broughton, Chief of Staff, NYS Assembly, Office of Assistant Speaker Felix W. Ortiz

2. Presidents' Welcome - Camille Casaretti, CEC15 President and Celia Green, CCHS President

- Welcomed members of Community Board 2, 6 & 7 and elected officials and their representatives.
- Thank you to Principal and staff of M.S. 51 for allowing the use of the auditorium.
- Representatives from the DOE will be presenting the Mayor's Plan and CEC15 and CCHS wants to hear what attendees think. This will be one of many presentations throughout the city in the coming months.



- Assemblymember Jo Anne Simon will also host a forum next week, Thursday, January 24 at 6:00 p.m. at the Grand Army Plaza Library. Her event will include a panel discussion featuring experts on testing and test validity, alternatives to testing, and increasing racial, ethnic and gender diversity in the City's specialized schools. Assembly Members Simon and Ortiz are among our State Legislators who would be voting on the new policy should it go to Albany.
- Ms. Green went over the Rules of Decorum.
- Ms. Casaretti - D15 is in the process of desegregating our middle schools by changing admission policies. The District spent the last year hosting community forums to assess data and collect feedback from parents, teachers and staff. D15's new admission policies are ground breaking and will change the landscape of our District's schools. With community help and advocacy, D15 was able to send a message to our Chancellor and Mayor that D15 wants to make New York a better place for ALL of our children to learn and grow together in a diverse setting. As we move toward this more collaborative, inclusive model for educating our students and staff, and with the vision of our D15 Superintendent Anita Skop, and our talented teachers and dedicated families we are on the road to a more equitable learning environment for everyone.
- The Mayor is now asking for our feedback on his proposal to eliminate the Specialized High School Admissions Test. CEC15 and CCHS, along with our Elected Officials, and Community Board 2, 6 and 7 would like to hear the community's feedback as well.
- A survey was sent last week via email. Most of the feedback relayed the message that the lack of diversity is unacceptable and that D15 would like to see that change. The focus on additional testing was also a big concern of our D15 families and teaching staff around this proposal.
- D15 knows that equity does not mean taking from one population and giving to another. And we know that there are many excellent high schools all over the city that do not fall under the Specialized High School heading.
- Ms. Casaretti urged attendees to please jot down notes and comments on the comment card they were given while they listen to the presentation. CEC15 and CCHS are very interested in hearing what the community has to say.

3. Superintendent's Welcome - Anita Skop, D15 Superintendent

- Excited to see children in the audience. It's a wonderful opportunity to see a civics lesson. This is how democracy works.
- CEC15 and Community Boards have done a wonderful job allowing your voices to be heard.
- Urged everyone present to please share their feedback. If they do not feel comfortable making a public comment, she asked that they please email her at askop@schools.nyc.gov or email CEC15 at cec15@schools.nyc.gov.

4. [Mayor's Proposal to Improve Diversity at Specialized High Schools Presentation](#) - Nadiya Chadha, Director, Enrollment Research Policy, DOE's Office of Student Enrollment

- Students can apply for 8 [specialized high schools in New York City](#) by taking the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT). These 8 testing schools are:
 - The Bronx High School of Science
 - The Brooklyn Latin School



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- Brooklyn Technical High School
- High School for Mathematics, Science and Engineering at City College of New York
- High School of American Studies at Lehman College
- Queens High School for the Sciences at York College
- Staten Island Technical High School
- Stuyvesant High School
- Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts is not part of this proposal because this school requires an audition to apply not a test.
- The goals of the [Mayor's Plan](#) are to:
 - Consider more than a single exam. A single exam is not the best indicator of student potential. New York City is the only district in the country to admit students based on a single exam.
 - Maintain the academic rigor of the Specialized High Schools (SHS).
 - Increase diversity at the SHS. Black and Latino students make up 68% of the NYC high school population, but only 9% were offered a seat. Low-income students make up 75% of the NYC high school population, but only 40% were offered a seat.
- There are two parts to this proposal.
- Part 1 of the proposal:
 - Expand the Discovery program to 20% of seats at each SHS. The Discovery program is a summer enrichment program that helps high performing, disadvantaged students gain admission to SHS. Each SHS is in charge of running their own Discovery program.
 - Target students at high-poverty schools. A high-poverty school has an Economic Need Index (ENI) of at least 60%. This estimates the percentage of students in a school who face economic hardship. Look up any school's ENI on the school performance [dashboard](#).
- Part 2 of the proposal:
 - Phase out the admissions test, SHSAT, in over 3 years.
 - Make SHS offers to the top 7% of students from each DOE public middle school.
- New York State Law currently requires that SHSAT is the sole criterion for admission to the SHS.
- **In order for any of these changes to go into effect, the New York State legislature must vote to change state law.**
- Regardless of any changes to state law, the DOE will launch Part 1, expansion of the Discovery program, in the summer of 2019. This will increase the number of middle school and Brooklyn schools representation.
- SHS demographics will mirror NYC demographics more closely: 36% point increase in offers to Black and Latino students, 18% point increase in offers to female students, 21% point increase to low-income students.
- There will be more diversity of home languages represented at the SHS.
- What else is the DOE doing?
 - Expanding early education
 - Offering more challenging coursework
 - Increasing school funding
 - Creating more access across the city
- For any questions please email: diversity@schools.nyc.gov



5. Questions from CEC15, CCHS and Elected Officials

- Q: Regarding students who opt out, how does that factor in admissions? A: The top 7% will be decided on a number of measures. If a student has opted out from testing, but they have a high GPA then they qualify for the top 5% in the remaining spots allocated by lottery.
- Q: Would you be meeting with communities? Would you meet with community board members to discuss more in depth conversation that the board can relay to their communities? A: Yes, we are just finishing up our CEC engagement. We can come back to meet with community board members.
- The rationale behind swapping one test for another does not make sense. Students who opt out from taking the standardized tests have lower chances to qualify for a specialized high school. A: One metric test will be used which is a better test for students to show their potential, but we'll look into that.
- Q: In terms of the criteria, why was a hard cut off selected as opposed to setting a minimum standard of proficiency for admission, with a lottery among those who meet the standard? A: The key is to look at multiple things. We will look into it.
- Council Member Brad Lander: Having a dialogue on how to tackle segregation in the NYC school system is very significant thing. We worked hard in D15 to have this dialogue on the middle school admissions process in a way that will be consist in making progress and also listening to a lot of voices and it pushed us even further. Did not come here to talk, but to simply listen. It's great that there are so many people out here ready to have this conversation.

6. Public Comments - The floor was open for public comments.

- Members of the public gave comments.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent by 10 voting members present 8:40 p.m.

- Minutes submitted by Francisca Andino, Administrative Assistant