



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15

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

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Calendar Meeting Minutes

Approved Oct 7, 2019

Date: August 5, 2019

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: 131 Livingston Street, Room 508 A/B

Agenda (as publicly posted):

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Introduction of New CEC15 Council Members
3. President's Report - Camille Casaretti, CEC15 President
4. D15 Superintendent's Report - Maggie Desir-Hart, Field Support Liaison
5. Conversation on Controlled Choice and Priority Admissions
 - o Naomi Peña, CEC1 President
 - o Ellen McHugh, Citywide Council Special Education President
 - o Sean Patrick Corcoran, Vanderbilt University (Associate Professor of Public Policy and Education)
6. Vote on CEC15 Meeting Dates
7. Review of BCAS - Building Conditions Assessment Survey
8. Public Comments
9. Discussion of the Hiring of New CEC15 Administrative Assistant
The Council is expected to go into Executive Session. Executive Sessions are not open to the public.
10. Adjournment

Call to Order at 6:35 p.m.

Welcome to CEC15 Calendar Meeting - Kimmerly Scott, CEC15 Treasurer

- Ms. Scott gave a summary on CECs and what they do for their school districts.

1. Roll Call - Camille Casaretti

Present:

Camille Casaretti, President
Mark Bisard, Co-Vice President 1, IEP Rep.
Kimmerly Scott, Treasurer
Bess Abrahams, Member
Francisca Montaña, BP Appointee
Scott Powell, Member

Late:

Kathy Park Price, Member

Absent:

Antonia Ferraro, Co-Vice President 2 - Excused
Krystal Cason, Member - Excused
Anna Nadal Burgues, ELL Rep. - Excused



Invited Guests:

Maggie Desir-Hart, D15 Field Support Liaison

Steven Wieser, District Based Parent Liaison, Office of Family and Community Empowerment (FACE)

Naomi Peña, CEC1 President

Ellen McHugh, Citywide Council Special Education President

Sean Corcoran, Vanderbilt University (Associate Professor of Public Policy and Education)

2. Introduction of New CEC15 Council Members

- CEC15 President Camille Casaretti introduced newest CEC15 Member Francisca Montaña. Ms. Montaña is the Borough President Appointee.
- Working mother of 2: one child in elementary school and the other in middle school
- Was a parent organizer
- Works for AG Letitia James
- Part of the LGBTQ community
- Wants to help to elevate the voice of the underrepresented communities

3. President's Welcome - Camille Casaretti, CEC15 President

- The work CEC15 has done in calling attention to the social and emotional well being of D15 children around culturally responsive curriculum has been noticed and people are acting on it. In advocating what's best for all of our children, the Panel for Education Policy just approved the Chancellor's request to offer [culturally responsive sustaining education](#) to schools across the city.
- With an upcoming rezoning in our future, it's more important than ever to share information in a judgement free zone, and in understanding each other.
- Tonight, a few leaders in the field of zoning and admissions who will speak about how policies can assist in desegregating schools and improve educational outcomes for all students.
- Due to an increase in seats at P.S. 32, seven elementary schools in the SubDistrict may be rezoned. There were presentations made by the DOE in April, May and June. The DOE is taking this opportunity to engage the community in ways that they never have done before. Rather than present the community with a finished map, DOE officials have proposed 2 approaches to rezoning, in an effort to reduce overcrowding and address disparities across the seven schools. The proposed plans are available on CEC15 website cecd15.org and on the section for [District Planning](#) on the DOE website.
- The Office of District Planning (ODP) is currently seeking feedback on the proposals. They will respond to all emails received. The DOE is producing a fact sheet that will answer some of the questions that people have asked. The feedback received has been varied. The large majority of feedback shows that the community is in support of increasing equity and diversity in our schools. Please reach out to BrooklynZoning@schools.nyc.gov with questions and comments.
- ODP has offered to speak with SLTs and at PTA Meetings. If you want them to come to your school, [just ask](#).
- ODP will be meeting with Red Hook families tomorrow, Aug 6, at PS 676.
- NYS Senator and Education Committee Chair John Liu will be coming to CEC15 Calendar Meeting on September 24. If people have specific questions they would like to ask Senator Liu please send them to CEC15@schools.nyc.gov in advance. CEC15 will try to get those answers incorporated into what he will talk about at the meeting.
- Chancellor Richard A. Carranza reached out about a Town Hall in D15. The tentative date is Oct 10.**

please note that the D15 Town Hall will be scheduled in the Spring



4. D15 Superintendent's Report - Maggie Desir-Hart, Field Support Liaison

- Moving along with the diversity plan. The Superintendent's office is looking into hiring a Diversity Coordinator who will be the point person for everything diversity plan related. The Diversity Coordinator will monitor the plan, look at the outcome and data to make sure the diversity plan moves along according to the goals. The Superintendent's office has chosen a candidate. Information on the candidate will be shared soon.
- To make sure all voices are heard during the rezoning conversation, the D15 office has tried to reach out to the President of the Gowanus Residents Association to try to arrange a meeting.
- DOE has plans in place to reach out to the Red Hook families.
- The district has been busy this summer with training for staff and administrators. All school staff members attended implicit bias training as well as restorative justice practices. Training on new LGBTQ guidelines will happen as well, although it's not official yet.
- Equity Congress will continue this year. Equity Congress is made up of representatives from each school in the district. Currently looking for diverse group of D15 stakeholders as well as teachers and school administrators to join. Please get in touch with your school's principal to find out how to join.
- When asked about safety protocols in schools, in light of school shootings, Ms. Desir-Hart said that as far as she knows school safety protocols have not changed.
- When asked about the reports on lead, Ms. Desir-Hart said there should be a letter going out to all schools that were found to have lead in their paint or peeling paint that might have caused a problem, especially for those schools that have kids 6 years old and under. Protocols are being followed and any changes will be happening within the first couple of weeks of school. Parents should be getting a letter if their child's school is on the list.

5. Conversation on Controlled Choice and Priority Admissions

- Sean Patrick Corcoran, Vanderbilt University (Associate Professor of Public Policy and Education):
 - At NYU for 13 years, researched mostly High School choice but is now looking at elementary and middle school choice.
 - Randomized experiments helped parents to choose and view schools they wouldn't normally consider a high priority.
 - Controlled choice involves a form of control while uncontrolled choice it's more of an open free form universal choice.
 - Controlled Choice has often been used as a means of reducing achievement gaps but also for reducing segregation. In most parts of the country, where one attends school is governed by where they live and since neighborhoods in the U.S. tend to be segregated by race and class, schools have been as well. In theory, if we can break that link between neighborhoods and school assignments by allowing parents to apply to any school, it can potentially reduce the level of segregation.
 - Uncontrolled choice has no impact on desegregating, and results in no change. Just allowing parents to apply to schools does not change outcomes. Families have different preferences, different resources to devote to school searches, different information about their options.
 - Uncontrolled choice can lead to greater segregation.
 - Controlled choice allows parents to submit their preferences, and schools apply priorities to ensure a more representative population of students at each school. Controlled choice doesn't leave the diversity goals up to chance and is more successful at meeting diversity goals than uncontrolled choice.
 - Controlled choice can be done in a number of different ways, one way can be with school zones and one way can be without zones (unzoned). With zones a fraction of seats can be set aside that will be prioritized for students with a particular need or background. Without zone there will be no zone priority



but rather all families can apply to all schools within that district or subdistrict with some seats set aside for students with a particular need or background. Some combination of the two will need to be done in order to achieve diversity goals. One way of accomplishing this is by combining different priorities.

- When seats are set aside for students with a particular need or background, there is no guarantee that families will actually apply for those seats. There needs to be some work done to ensure that families are aware of their options and taking advantage of those.
- Including priority admissions in programming is necessary in creating truly integrating classrooms.
- With controlled choice, it is typical for 80-90% of families to receive one of their top three choices.

- Naomi Peña, CEC1 President

- Before Mayoral Control, D1 was a controlled choice district. Choice without controls leads to segregation.
- District 1 has a controlled choice model now. D1 is currently in year 2 of controlled choice.
- Choice without control creates a self segregation model. District 1 is one of the few districts that is completely unzoned.
- Some of the schools in District 1 are over capacity and have long waiting lists. District 1 advocated to have a priority list for students in temporary housing, students with disabilities, students who qualify for free and reduced lunch and multi language learners. That makes up 67% of the district. Asking families to add at least 5 choices to their applications. This forces families to look at more schools. There are a lot of great things happening in all school buildings. This is a way to give schools a chance. With this model they have 7 schools currently integrated, while at the time of admissions they only had 4. This is a slow moving process.
- The same admissions metrics were applied to the dual language and gifted and talented programs.
- This model was applied for Pre-K and Kindergarten students. The hope is that eventually as these classes move up the schools will be more representative of the diversity in the district.
- D1 middle schools have screened admissions, however one overly subscribed school now has controlled choice due to the applicant pool becoming more segregated. This school has a long history of being Integrated and continues to be.

- Ellen McHugh, Citywide Council Special Education Co-President

- The Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was passed in 1975. Prior to that there was no requirement for any child with any special needs to go to any school. The only option families had was to send their child to a segregated school. There was no right for children with disabilities to go to a regular school.
- When students with special needs were assigned to a school, there were no other options. Families bussed their kids all over the city, they were grateful in many ways to have a place to send their children. Quality education was not high on their list.
- In the present time options for children with disabilities are almost as broad as for general education students except for attitude. Ms. McHugh has never experienced any discrimination, but her child has been discriminated against a number of times because of his disability.
- Numerically 10% of any population is disabled, and about 3% is profoundly disabled. Ms. McHugh feels for any system to look like the community it reflects 10 seats for every 100 should be set aside for children with disabilities to reach any kind of ideal setting. Kids with disability still use different doors to get into school buildings and they're refused access to the Gifted & Talented (G & T) program. Many kids with disabilities can be gifted and talented. For example, a child can be gifted and talented and blind. Some autistic children are gifted.



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- Staff and PTA/PAs have long objected to setting aside rooms for kids with special needs with the excuse that the school building is crowded, but when it comes to setting rooms aside for G & T it's not so crowded.
- Since this is a K through 8 district the biggest work should be done in the K through 5 level.
- In a traditional public school there is absolutely no reason to segregate children on disability, color, race or ethnic background. Education has to occur both at the school level and the parent level.
- Would like to see Sign Language offered in more schools.
- CEC15 Members and members of the public asked the guest speakers questions:
 - On Controlled Choice - Changes in demographics can happen right away. Academic outcomes take longer. Schools start to attract better teachers, the process takes time. There are still perceived better schools but they are less polarized.
 - On mixing 1s and 4s in the same classroom - Lower performing students usually increase, higher performing students typically do not get lower.
 - On getting an IEP mid year - a lot depends on the interaction of parents and staff. Turning 5 process is confusing. All schools should offer special education services.
 - On outreach to the community with controlled choice - D1 offers a lot of family workshops, Saturday workshops, school tours and school staff speak at the meetings. It's important for families to know what each school has to offer. Important to have info sessions and a pamphlet.
 - Family Welcome Center vs Family Resource Center. The Resource Center is more welcoming, goes out into the community, goes to the early childhood centers to speak to families and answer questions. The resource center is partially funded by CBOs. They have laptops and help families access information.
 - On outreach to families - MomSquad volunteers, sent surveys, asked questions, learned about how people made choices, went to churches, spoke with CBOs, held family events in Spanish and Mandarin, offered craft classes to bring people together.
 - On success in controlled choice - School leadership is very important. They set the expectations. Change starts at the top.
 - On people making choices - With fewer options people can actually visit all the schools. The High School process has over 400 schools, you can't see all 400 schools.
 - On segregation in programming - One source of segregation is linked to G&T
 - On Title 1 vs PTA Fundraising - Title 1 schools receive a lot of money, PTAs don't have to fundraise. You can bring communities together and not worry about the fundraising.
 - On IEP Mobility Challenges - physical access should be a priority. Accessible transportation can be listed on the IEP, child can travel with a paraprofessional. There are wheelchair accessible buses.
 - On walking to school - In a controlled choice model, parents can prioritize the schools that are in walking distance. 80-90% of families receive one of their top 3 choices.
 - On phasing in controlled choice - In the first year you can create zoned with set asides, in the second year you can unzone with set asides.
 - On unintended consequences - People shift around, it's a variable.
 - Discussion on the WXY process and if the DOE would fund something like that. Scott Powell will reach out to Executive Superintendent Karen Watts to inquire.

6. Vote on CEC15 Meeting Dates

- CEC15 members voted on the meeting dates from [September 2019 to June 2020](#).

CEC15 meeting dates approved by 7 voting members present.



7. Review of BCAS - Building Conditions Assessment Survey - Due to internet connectivity issues this item was TABLED TO THE NEXT MEETING

8. Public Comments

9. Discussion of the Hiring of New CEC15 Administrative Assistant

The Council went into Executive Session. Executive Sessions are not open to the public.

Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the hiring of new CEC15 Administrative Assistant - Scott Powell

2nd motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the hiring of new CEC15 Administrative Assistant - Kathy Park Price

Motion passed unanimously by 7 voting members present.

Executive Session began at 9:31 p.m.

Voting Members Present:

Camille Casaretti, President

Mark Bisard, Co-Vice President 1, IEP Rep.

Kimmerly Scott, Treasurer

Bess Abrahams, Member

Francisca Montaña, BP Appointee

Kathy Park Price, Member

Scott Powell, Member

Steven Wieser, District Based Parent Liaison, Office of Family and Community Empowerment (FACE) and Administrative Assistant Francisca Andino were invited to stay during the Executive Session.

Motion to end Executive Session at 9:38 p.m. - Camille Casaretti

2nd motion to end Executive Session at 9:38 p.m. - Scott Powell

Motion passed unanimously by 7 voting members present.

CEC15 President Camille Casaretti updated the council on the status of the hiring of the new CEC15 Administrative Assistant

10. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting - Scott Powell

2nd motion to adjourn the meeting - Mark Bisard

Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 9:39 p.m.

- Minutes submitted by Francisca Andino, Administrative Assistant