



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

January 28, 2025

CEC15 RESOLUTION TO DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY FROM THE
SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

The District 15 Community Education Council (CEC15) held a meeting on Tuesday, January 28, 2025. After reviewing all the evidence and facts, CEC15 passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the New York City School Construction Authority (SCA) manages and oversees all major school-related construction and renovation projects in the city of New York;

WHEREAS, the SCA has an annual operating budget of \$281 million as of 2024, and a five-year capital plan for fiscal years 2025-2029 totaling \$19 billion, all funded primarily by city bonds;¹

WHEREAS, the SCA is governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of three members, the chancellor of New York City Public Schools, who holds the title of chair, and two other members appointed by the Mayor;²

WHEREAS, the SCA Board of Trustees consists of Chancellor Melissa Aviles Ramos, Chair of the SCA Board of Trustees, and Trustee Peter McCree. The third seat remains vacant;³

¹ Andrew Lane-Lawless, "Report on the Proposed Fiscal 2025-2029 Capital Plan, Fiscal 2025 Preliminary Capital Budget and the Fiscal 2024 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report for the School Construction Authority," *New York City Council Finance Division*, March 18, 2024, <https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2024/03/SCA-1.pdf>.

² <https://dnnhh5cc1.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/Legal/SCA%20Enabling%20Act%20-%20REV%201-14-20.pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=17vMRInORBLXxG2sLLejDckBVHaMSsPlgwaZN%2BfqCjs%3D>

³ https://dnnhh5cc1.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/General/Board_of_Trustees_Meeting/TrusteePage%20-%20October%202024.pdf?sv=2017-04-17&sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=TFeZHh9nnVtidqOBqO3TgHT6%2Bj4ryzxVLcu9eg5wCjY%3D

WHEREAS, according to documents provided to District 15 by the SCA there are currently 52 open SCA projects⁴ in District 15 and no timeline for completion has been made available to the public or the City Council Education Committee;

WHEREAS, there is a lack of coordination between the concerned parties, with the residents and families often feeling uninformed and unheard;

WHEREAS, school and district leadership, including principals and superintendents, do not have oversight or authority over SCA projects happening in their schools and districts;

WHEREAS, contracts are awarded to the lowest responsible bidder,⁵ such that contractors are not always adequately vetted during the bidding process, and the selection process for supervisory staff is not transparent;

WHEREAS, project delays and mismanagement negatively affect student learning as well as overall community dynamics;

WHEREAS, District 15 principals from numerous schools have reported significant problems with SCA projects, including delays, mistakes, structural damage, flooding, fires, and security risks, such as classroom locks being changed without notice and doors being left open while students are in the building;

WHEREAS, principals report that there is often minimal or no oversight of workers, and that their requests for improved communication and oversight go unaddressed for extended periods of time;

WHEREAS, contracts are often paid in advance of the completion of work, resulting in significant outlays with sometimes minimal progress, as was the case at PS 15 where \$11 million was paid to a negligent contractor whose work had to be overhauled;

WHEREAS, research has shown that these problems are endemic to the SCA;⁶

WHEREAS, these problems represent misuse of public funds and create risks to student and community safety; and

WHEREAS, SCA neglect disproportionately affects students in disadvantaged communities who may not have alternative spaces or resources at their disposal.

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https://dnnhh5cc1.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/Capital_Plan/Management_Reports/cc_qr04_by_geodist.pdf?sv=2017-04-17&sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=DdA2hF2U%2B4EBthOR5zmXJ6%2BXQuMoqClkbXXP4G04BCs%3D

⁵ Frank Anechiarico and James B. Jacobs, “Purging Corruption from Public Contracting: The ‘Solutions’ are Now Part of the Problem,” *NYLS Law Review*, 40.1, 1995.

https://digitalcommons.nyls.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2020&context=nyls_law_review

⁶ Ahmed Abdelghafar, “Identifying Challenges, Best Practices, and Potential Solutions to New York City School Construction Authority Project Delays” (2024), <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.29633.77928>.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that CEC15 recommends City Council convene a task force to study, develop and implement reforms to the SCA, and to conduct a hearing on contract management, spending, quality control, and overruns; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that structural reforms to the SCA include changes to the law such that the New York City Comptroller is a member of the SCA Board of Trustees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the SCA be required to develop stronger communication practices among school leadership, district leadership, elected officials, and the public; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the SCA develop stricter internal protocols for meeting school- and district-specific standards; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the SCA engage in community listening sessions to identify concerns and respond to questions, in order to take community feedback into consideration; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the SCA regularly publish clear and accessible timelines of ongoing projects, as well as periodic reports to the City Council's Education Committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the SCA establish a dedicated coordination team responsible for communicating with schools and the local community to ensure smooth workflow and reduce friction; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the SCA review current protocols for bid selection to ensure that low-quality contractors are not awarded subsequent bids;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the SCA provide training for new employees, particularly those at a managerial or supervisory level; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the SCA establish a periodic review system to monitor contractor performance, with the possibility of stopping work in the event of breaches in quality standards; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the SCA utilize best practices and modern tools to facilitate project management and communication; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mayor appoint the third trustee to the SCA so that the body functions as designed.

This resolution was duly adopted by Community Education Council 15 on January 28, 2025 by a vote of the members present, including: Antonia Ferraro Martinelli, Leslie King, Vanessa Gonzalez Ueoka, Katina Rogers, Jonathan Davis, Hans Arrieta, Kwame Egerton, Nancy Randall and Danley Vidal.