



# COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15

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

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## Calendar Meeting - Overcrowding and Class Size Approved on 5/10/18 at a Business Meeting

**Date: 04/17/2018**

**Time: 6:30 p.m.**

**Location: PS 94, 5010 6th Avenue, Auditorium**

### Calendar Meeting Agenda (as publicly posted)

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Welcome - Pres. Camille Casaretti
3. Approval of Minutes from March 20 and March 27
4. District 15 Superintendent Report - Anita Skop
5. Class Size Matters Presentation with Q&A
6. Make Space for Quality Schools with Q&A
7. Brooklyn Rise Charter School Presentation - Cary Finnegan
8. Council Questions and Answers
9. Public Comments
10. Adjournment

**Call to Order 6:32 p.m.**

### 1. Roll Call - Charles Star

Present:

Camille Casaretti, President

Kathy Park Price, Co-Vice President

Scott Powell, Co-Vice President

Charles Star, Treasurer

Nicole Brier

Mark Bisard

Antonia Ferraro

Yanfeng Zhang

Late:

Elena Romero

Absent:

Neal Zephyrin, Excused

Lili Velez, Excused

Invited Guests:



Anita Skop, D15 Superintendent  
Sebastian Spitz, Class Size Matters  
Javier Salamanca, Make Space for Quality Schools  
Cary Finnegan, Rise Charter School

**2. Welcome - President Camille Casaretti**

- Thanked everyone for coming.
- Welcomed Sebastian Spitz, Javier Salamanca and Cary Finnegan
- D15 Workshop #3 will be on Saturday, May 12 at 12pm at Miccio Community Center located at 110 W. 9th Street. Workshop will focus on diversity in middle schools. Please RSVP. Childcare, food, translations and metrocards will be provided.

**3. Approval of Minutes from March 20 and March 27**

**March 20 Minutes - No changes were suggested**

**Motion to approve March 20 minutes - Nicole Brier**  
**2nd motion to approve March 20 Minutes - Antonia Ferraro**  
**March 20 minutes approved by all 8 members in attendance**

**March 27 Minutes - No changes were suggested**

**Motion to approve March 27 Minutes - Charles Star**  
**2nd motion to approve March 27 Minutes - Antonia Ferraro**  
**March 27 minutes approved by all 8 members in attendance**

**4. District 15 Superintendent Report - Anita Skop**

- Had the privilege to be introduced to the new chancellor, Richard Carranza. Had breakfast with him in the morning and toured Brooklyn North. Spoke extensively with Chancellor Carranza about the importance of special needs students to be integrated. Chancellor Carranza was an English Learner and is very committed to the children and to the arts.
- Middle school 1st round of acceptance letters have gone out. More than  $\frac{2}{3}$  of children got their first or second choice.
- Excited to have a brand new school open in Sunset Park in September - St. Agatha's. For more information please call her office at 718-935-3424 and ask for Brenda Diaz.

*Question: Any more detailed information on number of appeals for Middle School admissions?*

*Superintendent Skop: I think we can get that but will take a bit of time. The number of kids who did not get top 2 choices decreased this year.*

*Question: Regarding the Diversity Committee, is that still happening?*

*Superintendent Skop: Yes, they are currently being established.*



*Question: Regarding the math test, are measures being taken to make it comfortable for kids taking the tests especially a PS 124?*

*Superintendent Skop: Contacted Facilities Dept. Joe Lazarus' deputy met with custodial staff regarding this. I drove to the school both mornings of the ELA tests. Constructions at schools, like PS 32, were stopped during testing hours. If it's too hot in a classroom teachers can open a window. If a parent has a problem with where their child is taking the test please have them contact the principal.*

*Question: There were reports that the test was too long. What has the DOE done to change this?*

*Superintendent Skop: I have not seen the test but ask for feedback from principals. She has notified Testing Dept. about the length of the test. As a state law it is an expectation that kids should take the test but parents have the right to opt out.*

## **5. Class Size Matters Presentation with Q&A - Sebastian Spitz**

- Class Size Matters is a non-profit organization which advocates for smaller classes in New York City.
- Student-Teacher Ratio measures the ratio of the total number of students in a school to the total number of teaching staff. Smaller class size has been linked to higher test scores. To learn more about the benefits of small class size visit: [www.classsizematters.org](http://www.classsizematters.org)
- The Contracts for Excellence (C4E) law passed in 2007 required NYC to lower class sizes in all grades, but class size in D15 increased since 2007. A legal complaint was filed in July with the state commissioner against the DOE's refusal to reduce class size. They appealed the commissioner's decision last week which claimed that the DOE's obligation to reduce class size had lapsed.
- In 2014 the DOE promised to focus on reducing class size in Renewal schools, but 42% of Renewal schools did not reduce average class sizes from 2014 to 2018. As of November 2017, 73% of Renewal schools continue to have maximum class sizes of 30 or more students.
- According to the DOE data about 43% of NYC schools were overcrowded. About 56% of students were enrolled in overcrowded schools: 68% of elementary students, 33% of middle school students and 49% of high school students.
- Enrollment has grown faster than capacity.
- Of the 45,000 net seats, 42,657 were filled by charter school students, while only 2,357 were filled by public school students.
- February 2018 DOE five-year capital plan is very underfunded. Only 52% of seats needed in D15 are funded.
- 70% of K-8 schools in D15 are overcrowded. D15 is at 114% utilization.
- Co-located schools do not have an efficient use of space because of the need to duplicate certain spaces. It can also cause problems with the use of joint spaces like cafeterias, auditoriums, and gyms.
- A new planning process for schools is needed. Given rapid pace of development throughout the city, school overcrowding will become even worse. We need reforms so that schools are built along with new housing. In most large states and districts, developers have to pay an "impact fee" to help fund new infrastructure including schools, but not in New York City.
- For more information please email your questions to [info@classsizematters.org](mailto:info@classsizematters.org).

*Question: What categorizes a school as overcrowded?*



*Mr. Spitz: If enrollment is greater than capacity than it's considered as overcrowded*

*Question: If Sunset Park schools are overcrowded why are they losing funding?*

*Superintendent Skop: If this is regarding PS 169 the headcount of students went down. Last year they had about 1700 students, this year they have 1500.*

#### **6. Make Space for Quality Schools with Q&A - Javier Salamanca**

- Parent in Sunset Park. His son attends PS 24.
- Sunset park is very overcrowded, lunch period is chaotic, as well as recess.
- Has advocated for constructions of new schools.
- Pressured politicians to find space for new schools.
- Went out and talked to parents and had petitions signed.
- When schools are overcrowded they lose library, science labs, art rooms.
- There are lots available to be used for schools.
- The overcrowding issue at PS 169 has been happening for at least 25 years.
- With the support from some politicians, CEC15, the Presidents' Council, St. Agatha's will be opening in the fall. The second site to that school will in the near future.

*Comment: My daughter is in an overcrowded school. She could barely see the board because of how crowded it is in the classroom. There is a big gap in distance between schools. My younger daughter could not get a seat in the Pre-K program at the same school as my older daughter because of how overcrowded it is.*

- We need to figure out how to get the city to be a bigger player in getting sites for our schools.
- Follow him [Facebook.com/qualityschools4sunsetpark](https://Facebook.com/qualityschools4sunsetpark) or email him at [qualityschools4sunsetpark@gmail.com](mailto:qualityschools4sunsetpark@gmail.com)
- Families want to see hands on learning. They've been trying to include new resources in new schools like rooftop gardens and trilingual programs and indoor pools. Should take advantage of the new buildings committed to public schools.
- There's no space for a charter school in Sunset Park. There's no space in school buildings for charter schools.

*Question: Are there conversations about Pre-K to be like a head start model?*

*Superintendent Skop: No, half day Pre-Ks do not allow enough opportunity to teach the children.*

#### **7. Brooklyn Rise Charter School Presentation - Cary Finnegan**

- The school's mission is to build the knowledge, habits and mindsets of students. College begins at kindergarten.
- The school motto is "With confidence, with voice, with purpose". She wants students to have a voice.
- Looking to open a charter school in Sunset Park, has been looking for a private facility, no co-location.
- Projecting to open in the fall of 2019 with 52 kindergarten students and 52 1st grade students. It will be a small school with 312 students at full capacity.



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- 13:1 student to teacher ratio (if not lower) and 2 teachers in each classroom (1 general education teacher and 1 teacher with additional certification in Special Education or ELL).
- They will have open enrollment. It will be an inclusion school with a diverse and integrated student body.
- Why Sunset Park? There is a severe overcrowding issue.
- They'll be providing a small school option using an inclusion model. School designed with ELLs students in mind.
- The school will have 10 core elements:
  - Longer school day and school year
  - Extended math, literacy and daily science
  - Responsive classroom school with recess and cooperation play
  - Small group instruction
  - Extra professional development and support for teachers.
  - Culturally responsive
  - Integrated arts programming
  - Assessment used to inform instructional practice
  - Character education and community partnership
  - Family partnership
- For more information visit [brooklynrise@brooklynrise.org](mailto:brooklynrise@brooklynrise.org), email her at [cary.finnegan@brooklynrise.org](mailto:cary.finnegan@brooklynrise.org), or call (718)619-0188

*Question: You mentioned that college begins in Kindergarten. What does that mean?*

*Ms. Finnegan: As soon as students enter in kindergarten we give each student the foundation they need starting at the very beginning.*

*Question: Will you be hiring state certified teachers?*

*Ms. Finnegan: There will be 2 teachers in the classroom. The classroom will be strengthened by having the 2nd teacher with a certification beyond general education. The goal is to have certified teachers.*

*Question: Is this a "no excuses" charter school?*

*Ms. Finnegan: No.*

*Question: Where do parents take their complaints to for accountability?*

*Ms. Finnegan: Take it to the head of the school. Attend board meetings to address complaints. If all of that does not work then take it to SUNY.*

*Question: What ratio of ELL students and services are you expected to provide?*

*Ms. Finnegan: I estimated about 40-60% of students to be English Learners. The lottery is weighted in favor of students whose first language isn't English. This is a way to diversify the school. It will not be lower than 40% of ELLs students.*

*Question: Where are you getting your money from for the 1st year?*



*Ms. Finnegan: New schools get startup money and also per pupil funding.*

*Question: Are any of the board members getting paid?*

*Ms. Finnegan: No, all members are volunteers.*

*Question: Are students allowed to opt out of state tests?*

*Ms. Finnegan: Yes. If too many students opt out we will lose funding, but I won't stop families from opting out.*

*Comment: This all sounds great but my big concern is accountability beyond the board.*

*Ms. Finnegan: We put someone in the board who is a huge special education advocate.*

*Question: How can the community rely on you?*

*Ms. Finnegan: We'll make sure that there are members on the board that are community members and add a parent.*

*Question: One of the board members is a Goldman Sachs employee, will you be taking money from Goldman Sachs?*

*Ms. Finnegan: No. I can't take money from Goldman Sachs.*

*Ms. Finnegan: Right now we have 9 members on the board. Looking to have 13 members in total. We are looking to have community members, including a parent to complete the board. Once approved the document I've presented will govern the school. The board can fire me if I do not follow the document.*

## **9. Public Comments**

- No public comments.

## **10. Adjournment**

**Motion to adjourn meeting - Camille Casaretti**

**2nd motion to adjourn meeting - Scott Powell**

**Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 9:02 p.m.**

-Minutes submitted by Francisca Andino, Administrative Assistant

### Next CEC15 Meetings:

Mon, Apr 23, Business Meeting - D15 Office Building, 131 Livingston Street, Room 501

Thurs, May 10, Business Meeting - PS 130, 713 Caton Avenue