



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15

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

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Calendar Meeting - Chancellor's Town Hall Approved on 07/17/2018 at a Business Meeting

Date: 06/13/2018

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: PS 24, 427 38th Street - Auditorium

Agenda (as publicly posted)

6:00 p.m. Call to Order/Roll Call

6:02 p.m. Welcome - Camille Casaretti, CEC15 President

Legislative Speakers:

- Assistant Speaker Felix W. Ortiz
- Council Member Brad Lander
- New York City Council Education Chair Mark Treyger
- Raul Rothblatt, Director of Community Affairs, Office of State Senator Jesse Hamilton
- Candice Julien, Deputy Program Officer, Office of Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams

6:20 p.m. D15 Superintendent Anita Skop

6:25 p.m. Introduction of Chancellor - Camille Casaretti, CEC15 President

6:30 p.m. Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

7:30 p.m. Adjournment

Call to Order 6:08 p.m.

Roll Call - Camille Casaretti

Present:

Camille Casaretti, President

Kathy Park Price, Co-Vice President

Scott Powell, Co-Vice President

Charles Star, Treasurer

Nicole Brier

Mark Bisard

Antonia Ferraro

Lili Velez

Yanfeng Zhang

Late:

Neal Zephyrin, Secretary - was at a Diversity Meeting with the Chancellor

Elena Romero



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Invited Guests:

Richard A. Carranza, NYC Department of Education Chancellor

Anita Skop, D15 Superintendent

Raymond Pierre Louis, Parent Leadership Liaison, FACE

Jesse Mojica, Executive Director of Parent Leadership

Jai Griem, Senior Liaison, Parent Leadership, FACE

Carlos Menchaca, Council Member District 38

Brad Lander, Council Member District 39

Vicki Sell, Education Liaison, Office of Council Member Brad Lander

Raul Rothblatt, Director of Community Affairs, Office of State Senator Jesse Hamilton

Candice Julien, Deputy Program Officer, Office of the Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams

Welcome - Camille Casaretti, CEC15 President

- Thrilled to host Chancellor's Town Hall
- Thanks to Principal Jacqueline Nikovic and the PTA for being so welcoming.

Raul Rothblatt, Director of Community Affairs, Office of State Senator Jesse Hamilton

- As Director of Community Affairs he's heard amazing ideas in every school. He's interested to hear from parents.
- NY Senate District 20 covers part of School Districts 23, 18, 15 and 13.
- State Senator Hamilton wants to make sure all schools have resources they need.
- For more information please contact him at RaulNYSenate@gmail.com

Candice Julien, Deputy Program Officer, Office of Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams

- Thank you to CEC15 for coordinating this event and welcome to the Chancellor.
- Brooklyn Borough President Adams [unveiled investment of \\$55 million](#) to advance STEAM education across more than 150 schools in Brooklyn.

Mary K. Seely, Assemblymember Robert Carroll's Office

- Interested to hear from everyone.

Neal Zephyrin, CEC 15 Secretary

- D15 Diversity Plan Update: Those who attended the 2nd workshop received a list of recommendations. The Working Group will present a draft of recommendations during the upcoming workshop. The final plan should be out by the 2nd week of July.

Superintendent's Report - D15 Superintendent Anita Skop

CEC15 President Camille Casaretti presented her with a CEC15 mug

- Each school must have an Equity Team. She's very passionate about this.
- The first Diversity Congress meeting was on May 31st. One person from each D15 school attended this meeting.



- She's a passionate believer that diversity and equity does not count by the number. We are living in difficult times and no one should feel less than anyone else.
- The Equity Teams are going forward. Please ask your schools about it.

PS 24 Principal Jacqueline Nikovic

- She cannot believe how full the auditorium is today. Thanked everyone for coming to PS 24.
- Thanks to CEC15 for showcasing PS 24.
- It's true that it takes a village. The school has a great staff. The PTA provided the food for this event.

Maruf Mitu Alam, Representing Assistant Speaker Félix W. Ortiz's Office

- Assistant Speaker is in Albany and not able to be here.
- D15 is doing great work by trying not to limit families and opening up seats to create more diversity in D15.

Council Member Carlos Menchaca, District 38

- Thrilled to see so many people present.
- So much we've done as team. So much to celebrate with so many new schools coming to Sunset Park.
- So much work has been happening integrating middle schools. Schools need to be integrated.

Council Member Brad Lander, District 39

- Honored to share D15 with Council Member Menchaca
- Excited to be welcoming Chancellor Carranza to D15.
- Thanks to parents pushing and demanding more than 800 schools will be getting the resources they need.
- Schools need to be more accessible to students with disabilities.
- Thank you to CEC15 and Superintendent for working very hard for District 15.
- Thank you to the Working Group for the issues raised about integration and diversity. It was not easy to have this conversation, not every step was perfect, but he's happy to have been part of the process.
- The energy the Chancellor has shown is inspiring. The city is so much better off with a Chancellor leading with integrity.

CEC15 President Camille Casaretti introduced Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

New York City Education Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

- Gave a special thanks to CEC15 for the work they are doing.
- Can't have a public school system without diversity.

CEC15 Members introduced themselves.

Council Member Elizabeth Velez presented the Chancellor with the poster board with visual notes from last CEC15 Calendar Meeting on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

CEC15 President Camille Casaretti presented him with a CEC15 mug.



Attendees were told that all comment cards will be submitted to Chancellor Carranza.

Questions to Chancellor Carranza:

Many parents believe to provide a better education children need to be in small classes. As Chancellor, will you work with reducing class size?

- Our principals, in many cases, have to work with the resources they have when accommodating students, but sometimes they have to decide where to put the money.
- Funding comes from State of New York and from the City. More funding will help hire more teachers to lower class size.
- Has not met one principal who does not need more resources.

Many schools are assessing students, how do you envision assessing students outside of testing?

- Does not believe that a single test can assess a student.
- Has asked and will continue to ask how a single test can help identify talent.
- We should ask students how schools are doing, ask for parents' feedback. It's good to know how parents, teachers and students feel about their schools.
- We should move conversation toward how we are educating students.
- Different strategies are used to teach children of many levels.
- If teachers are evaluated by test scores, they will not be able to teach all the wonderful things they are capable of teaching because they have to teach the test.

Will you agree to sit with educators to review how students are scored? Will you think it's unjust to use Title I to encourage opt out parents not to opt out of testing?

- He would love to meet with educators to have a professional conversation about tests.
- He will be very disappointed to learn of schools using Title I against parents' rights..
- Tests have been overused in the past, but it's important to determine whether students are learning.
- Respects parents' rights, but does not encourage opting out. The DOE should do a better job explaining how assessment works.

There were many questions regarding the placement of Success Academy middle schoolers. One question read: Can you please address the status of Success Academy Lafayette Middle School?

- Spent last week at one of Success Academy sites. Had the opportunity to speak to some teachers and students.
- Parents were very passionate about the decision that was made regarding PS 25. A decision was made to close PS 25, but the DOE was sued and a judge has halted the closing of PS 25.
- DOE has found almost [2000 seats to accommodate](#) the 70 middle schoolers from Success Academy.:
 - Bed-Stuy MS - 660 available seats



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- Myrtle MS - 390 available seats
- Ditmas Park MS - 870 available seats
- East Flatbush MS - 1,020 available seats
- This is very good news and will work with Success Academy to place them.

The D15 Integration Process has completely failed to include representatives from the community for students with disabilities. They are not in the Working Group and the advisors meant to represent them have never been appointed. Diversity in NYC DOE must start to better include students with disabilities. Disabled students are one of our most marginalized and excluded school minorities. What will you do to make integration and diversity for all?

- Everywhere he has served, including NYC, one of the first question he gets asked is: how are we including in conversation about policy and strategy, all stakeholders? That includes students with disabilities and their parents/guardians.
- One of the first things he did this evening was give kudos to D15 and their Diversity Task Force for their robust engagement process. However, there's a need to go back and ask: Who did we not talk to? Who did we not include?
- There's a need to identify do we believe that Special is a program or a service? If we believe that Special Education is a service that means that we as a system can send Special Education kids somewhere which teachers with teachers that send them in a school where they go. What ends up happening is the meaning of segregation.
- We must provide a special education service in the least restrictive environment which will be in a general education classroom.
- Students with disabilities come with an "instruction manual" called an IEP (Individual Education Plan). When they come to their general education classroom their IEP provides their teachers with a why, how and how long they provide these kinds of interventions in a general education classroom. That means that we open opportunities for all students, including students with disabilities, to enter specialized schools.
- NYC has many old buildings and many of these old buildings are not ADA accessible. We need to make them accessible to children with disabilities.
- Many students are mistakenly placed in special education. For example, English Language Learner students get masked under special education and receive an IEP. We need to be very clear how students get identified for special education services.
- Every parent should know their rights to what they can do/demand for their children with disability. Every IEP, every document should be in the home language of the parent. This is part of the fundamental rights parents have when it comes to making decisions for their children.

*What would you do to support English Language Learners who are inappropriately labelled as special needs?
What will you do to ensure ELLs are receiving the mandated services?*

- He has started to engage in a comprehensive review of all departments and initiatives.
- Why do we do what we do and how we can make it better.



What is the DOE doing about integration in our schools? What is the DOE doing to actually integrate schools in more than just words?

- The DOE is already investing a tremendous amount of resources towards integration.
- Pre-K for all is an integration strategy. It gives parents an opportunity to explore schools.
- Have secured millions of dollars in the budget for anti-bias training for adults. Starting to work with 8 to 12 school districts. Will train central office administrators, principals, teachers and support staff. This is an important work to make sure all students are not only supported by also accepted.
- DOE will start looking at all the curricula and materials through a culturally relevant perspective and lense so as we think about what our students are learning and being taught they are seeing the full mosaic of America which is a land of immigrants so that they see that in their classrooms.
- Visited 2 schools where students were able to tell him about Jim Crow laws, how the Jim Crow laws affected different groups in their own classroom of different ethnic groups. They were able to tell him why that was important. That's the kind of higher thinking we want incorporated in our schools and classrooms.
- Gave everyone in the audience 3 numbers: 64, 10, 17. These numbers are important because they pertain to integration.
- 64 years ago the Supreme Court ruled that separate but equal is not acceptable, especially in public schools, in their landmark Brown v. Board of Education. That ruling became the law of the land. 64 years ago the law of the land was very clear, but we have yet to integrate schools. There is no data that says that segregating students it's an effective practice for increasing academic achievement for all public school students. However, there is a growing body of knowledge and literature data that shows that integrating schools not only lifts some but lifts all.
- 10 years ago this country elected the first black President of the United States of America. We celebrated that we were finally in a post-racial society where we have elected the 1st black president despite our history and all those issues with race that we have fought, but it loped us into a false sense that we have reached a post-racial time and we were comfortable.
- 17 months post our last president and the current administration where there's an environment in our nation where it's okay to say racist things. In these 17 months the mere act of delivering a pizza to support your family will get you detained and put in the path of deportation.
- Urged everyone not to forget those numbers, to think about those numbers in the context of who we are as a nation, where we educate all children.
- Conversation about segregation is not divisive, it cannot be divisive because the conversation about integration is American. The work has only begun.

What is the purpose of having Specialized High Schools? Why not focus on improving education for K-8 instead?

- We are focusing on K-8 and not just K-8, but 3K-8 education. Have invested many resources for Pre-K for all, college access initiatives for all and improving renewal schools. A lot of time and resources



have been invested in improving the system as a whole so anyone that says “just improve K-8 schools” have not looked at the facts.

- Specialized High Schools need to be very careful with how they are “casting their net” to identify those students who are eligible to attend their schools.
- In a public school system there has to be as wide an opportunity as possible for students to have an opportunity to be eligible for those schools. There is no data that shows a single test for admission to a specialized education program is the best way to identify student talent.
- There 165 Specialized High Schools in the United States. New York City only has 9. This is the only city where there is a single test for admission to specialized high schools. Either the rest of the country is wrong and we are right or other people have figured out that in a public school system there are ways to identify student talent.
- Currently 50% of seats in specialized high schools are provided by 21 middle schools in a city where that has almost 600 middle schools.
- The new proposal will provide students who work hard and go to school everyday an opportunity to go to these specialized high schools, and parents, who many are poor, won’t need to spend thousands of dollars for test prep for just one test.
- This is conversation he’s inviting all communities to have. He will continue to have this conversation. The proposal is on the table and he’s looking forward for us as New Yorkers having this really important conversation. Are these schools for everyone? He thinks they are.

CEC15 President Camille Casaretti

- Thanked Chancellor Carranza and everyone for coming.

Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:35 p.m.

- Minutes submitted by Francisca Andino, Administrative Assistant