



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15

RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE REMOVAL OF MIDDLE SCHOOL SCREENS

On June 1, 2020, the Community Education Council District 15 held a meeting. Present were Camille Casaretti, Mark Bisard, Antonia Ferraro, Bess Abrahams, Kimmerly Scott, Tia Schelstede and Ivan Banda. After reviewing all the evidence and facts, CEC15 members unanimously passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the pandemic, Covid-19, has wreaked havoc on communities throughout New York State and New York City, causing over 21,000 deaths, leaving countless people out of work facing food insecurity, forcing families to be separated from their elderly relatives, and bringing fear and anxiety into the hearts of New Yorkers;

WHEREAS, the pandemic has caused disruption at the New York State Education Department, and consequently to the NYC school system, where grading and school admissions policies for middle school and high school must be amended;

WHEREAS, CEC15 supports the Department of Education's amendments to the grading policy that take into consideration the losses that students have suffered, the challenges that the switch to remote learning has brought about, the inequities that have been exacerbated by the pandemic, and the significant amount of supports that will be necessary to help students to succeed;

WHEREAS, CEC15 believes that all children, irrespective of race, socioeconomic status, religion, immigration status, or disability have a right to a great education in a safe environment;

WHEREAS, CEC15 believes the implementation of equitable admissions policies will help fulfill those objectives;

WHEREAS, sixty-four years after the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, in which the United States Supreme Court ruled that segregated schools are unconstitutional, New York City public schools are still separate and unequal;

WHEREAS, in 2014, the UCLA Civil Rights project revealed that New York's public schools are the most segregated in the country. Specifically, District 15 was identified as the most racially segregated school district in New York City;

WHEREAS, the New York City Department of Education is committed to supporting schools and programs that reflect New York City's diversity;

WHEREAS, in June 2017, the NYC Department of Education outlined its [*Equity and Excellence for All: Diversity in New York City Public Schools*](#) initiative to comprehensively tackle the issue of segregation in NYC public schools;

WHEREAS, in the Fall of 2017, the Department of Education, in collaboration with District 15 Superintendent Anita Skop, CEC 15, and numerous school community stakeholders embarked on a plan to promote diversity in District 15's middle schools;

WHEREAS, the D15 Diversity Plan¹ was created through engaging community members, using their input to help shape the plan, and making data related to school diversity more transparent;

WHEREAS, the D15 Diversity Plan was implemented to increase diversity, inclusion, and equity in our district's schools;

WHEREAS, the D15 Diversity Plan, in its second year, has promoted diversity in District 15's middle schools and become a model for district-level work across New York City;

WHEREAS, the D15 Diversity Plan has increased diversity, inclusion, and equity in our district's schools;

WHEREAS, District 15 is the only District that has critically looked at screens;

WHEREAS, the recommendations in the D15 Diversity Plan were based on months of research and community discussions highlighting the root causes and possible solutions to some of the inequities observed in D15 middle schools;

WHEREAS, the process of screening is damaging to students, parents and even schools in that the stress of worrying about the impact of a particular grade or attendance issue can actually harm children and create an incentive for learning and participation that is more about getting into the next grade than for the sake of actually learning;

WHEREAS, removal of screens not just benefits the middle school community but the elementary one as well by removing unwarranted stress on elementary students and on the schools themselves;

WHEREAS, the Diversity Plan was extremely successful, not only in its desegregation of the Middle Schools, but in that the majority of families were placed in a school of their choice;

¹ <http://d15diversityplan.com/>

WHEREAS, the Diversity Plan allows students opportunities for academic achievement while bringing together students and families from all over the District, creating understanding, and encouraging inclusive and welcoming environments;

WHEREAS, CEC15 would like to see an increase in diversity, inclusion, and equity in all NYC schools, as research shows students at socio-economically and racially integrated schools benefit from improved test scores, improved critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, lower dropout rates, reduction of racial bias, enhanced leadership skills, and better preparedness for success in the global economy; and

WHEREAS, the D15 Diversity Plan is a framework that offers a consistent and equitable system across the board and can be used as a model for district-level work across New York City.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that CEC15 urges Chancellor Carranza and the DOE to adopt middle school admissions policies that reflect the D15 Diversity Plan which maintains school choice, removes all school screens, and creates an admissions priority for low-income students, multilingual learners, and students in temporary housing, and one that is reflective of each district's population average, and applies the same rigorous equity lens to high school admissions. We believe this policy approach would acknowledge the trauma brought on by the pandemic, center the social emotional well-being of our students, and put equity at the forefront of decision making.