

COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15

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August Calendar Meeting

Via Teleconference

Tuesday, August 25, 2020

CEC15 President's Report - Camille Casaretti, CEC15 President

Welcome to the CEC15 August Calendar Meeting and thank you for taking the time to join this meeting. I am Camille Casaretti, President of CEC15 and I hope everyone is feeling well and that you and your loved ones are staying safe. We're nearing September and I do hope everyone has some plans to enjoy what is left of the summer.

And although we all should be relaxing and taking advantage of the weather, it seems that there are meetings every night of the week and we are all juggling a lot with our families. Staying positive and taking care of yourself is the only way to get through this crazy time we are moving through. It's important to remember that this pandemic will eventually pass and, although life may never be as we knew it, we must look to a happier day. We must help each other and stay strong together.

Our special guest this evening is Executive Superintendent Karen Watts. ES Watts oversees all the school districts in [Brooklyn North](#) including District 15. She is here tonight to share details on back to school planning and fill us in on what Brooklyn North has been doing these last few months to prepare for the start of school.

We will hear about reopening and school readiness plans with details on remote instruction. We will hear about how custodians are planning to keep our buildings clean and how students, teachers and staff in the hybrid model will stay safe once they return to the buildings.

School community members from PS516 and PS169 in Sunset Park have written with many concerns and we expect to have those concerns addressed this evening.

Our school communities have also asked for [guidance on outdoor learning](#). The Mayor made an announcement yesterday that will prioritize the areas of greatest concern. In District 15, the Sunset Park community is facing higher than average Covid rates and will be prioritized for outdoor learning.

Permit applications are due this Friday for street closure requests, or to use a nearby park. Only your Principal can file for this permit. For survey purposes, schools should also submit plans for school yard use. If schools choose an outdoor learning model, they must provide barriers and staffing in order to close any street. Schools are strongly encouraged to select streets that are quiet and non-commercial, ideally one way streets or streets not more than two lanes wide.

During the mayor's press conference yesterday, the mention of merging district PTA funds was brought up in regards to funding outdoor learning costs. District 15 school community members have been discussing this idea for quite some time now. If this is something you are interested in, please reach out so that we can form a small group to brainstorm how this might happen.

Last week, at the [Panel for Education Policy](#) Meeting, our CEC15 Vice President Ferraro, spoke in support of District 15 principals who were calling for a staggered start to in person schooling. Our expectation is that schools will safely reopen for in-person learning in some fashion and we want our school leaders to feel comfortable with that plan. As of now, the first day of classes remains as Sept 10. We will talk more about our support of the Principals later in the meeting.

There have been a lot of opportunities to hear the Chancellor speak about what the start of the new school year will look like at the [Return to School Family and Student Information Sessions](#). Sign up for a meeting on Thursday night this week or attend the event in Spanish on August 31. More information is on the DOE website.

CEC15 has also submitted a request to host a Chancellor's Town Hall for the week of Sept 14. We are waiting on confirmation of the exact date and will share that with you as soon as we have the information.

Some other upcoming meetings to keep in mind are on August 26 at 6:30 pm The Citywide Council on Special Education (CCSE@schools.nyc.gov) is having a Meeting Via Zoom, and the Citywide Council on High Schools (CCHS@schools.nyc.gov) is having a Meeting on Mon, August 31, from 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm.

Another bit of good news is that High School Superintendent Janice Ross and her team are here tonight and will be joining our meetings going forward to share HS updates.

I wanted to also let everyone know that on August 11 CEC15 held a Curriculum Workshop Joint Meeting with our Brooklyn friends at [CEC14](#). Dr. Starita Boyce Ansari spoke about [The New 3Rs](#) which is an anti bias, social justice based curriculum. Many of our District 15 teachers attended this meeting and asked about creating customized curriculum that meets the needs of their students. They are looking for a culturally responsive and rigorous curriculum that teaches history in an honest way and in a way that values every student.

As black people continue to die and be maimed through police brutality, our black friends are living in fear. If our generation refuses to change we must continue to create opportunities for growth and look to our children to see the truth and the humanity in all people. CEC15 will be hosting Diversity Equity and Integration (DEI) workshops throughout this school year. Please find time to attend these sessions and invite your friends and family members and anyone you feel might benefit from anti-bias work. These

sessions go beyond public school into personal growth and education about the world we live in. These spaces can oftentimes be uncomfortable but your discomfort will bring you to a greater understanding.

These DEI sessions come at a time when District 15 is discussing the [rezoning of 7 of our elementary schools](#). We are looking at this rezoning through an equity lens. Information from the [Participatory Action Research Team](#) went out via email earlier today along with a [survey](#) that they have created. Please take the time to fill it out. If you are not currently receiving emails from CEC15 please write to us at cec15@schools.nyc.gov and we will add you to our mailing list. We hope to have an update on the survey findings at our Business Meeting on Sept 8, so please save that date.

CEC15 is still seeking a English Language Learner Representative and a Student Member for the Council. The ELL Member must have a student that qualifies for ELL status, or has received ELL services within the last 2 years. The student member must be an entering High School Senior that lives in District 15. If you have someone you would like to nominate for either of these volunteer positions, please write to CEC15@schools.nyc.gov. There is a simple [application](#) to fill out that is posted on our website CECD15.org and an email will be going out again with all of the information.

All schools should have contacted parents by now to ask about their preference for the start of the school year. There are varying levels of comfort around in person learning during the pandemic and parents should choose what is best for them. I wish there were a way to give our school staff the same courtesy to choose. Teachers, parent coordinators, staff and principals are still waiting to hear if their [applications for medical accommodations](#) will be accepted. In this new world we are living in, we need to rethink how we treat and value employees in the workplace environment. A good place to start is in adjusting the limits for age exemption which used to be 70 and has been lowered to 65. The Department of School Facilities and our Custodians are working to make our schools safe from the virus. It's critical that the people entering these schools feel comfortable and confident that protocols are being followed. It's not too late to [sign up for fully remote learning](#) through the DOE survey. The deadlines have been extended. Know that families can opt into fully remote at any point during the year.

The Chancellor has been posting [Messages for Families](#) on the DOE webpage and there was a [Back to School Pledge](#) made recently to ensure a safe start to this school year. Today, the Mayor announced that inspectors will be sent to every school to look at ventilation. Promises were also made that there will be a nurse in every school building.

The Chancellor said we've had a billion dollars in cuts from the DOE, but school budgets have been untouched. Central DOE is also giving PPE and disinfectant materials to every school, and that fee is coming out of DOE Central Budgets.

We keep hearing that the fall is not going to be like it was last year. It's not going to be the same, there will not be 7 classes a day, no afterschool, but first and foremost is health and safety. We need the DOE to build as much normalcy into these plans as possible

We've heard some of what the school day will look like:

- ❖ Culturally responsive and rigorous instruction.
- ❖ Synchronys/live online instruction happening daily, in the morning, and at the end of the day.
- ❖ Students will also be expected to do assignments on the computer independently.
- ❖ Assignments and schedules will be posted in advance in order to assist with family planning, and adjustment of schedules.
- ❖ All teachers will be required to have 20 minutes of office hours daily.
- ❖ Instructional lunch will be modeled off of breakfast in the classroom.
- ❖ Staggered in person classes from 10-2pm will vary based on the grade your child is in.
- ❖ Community relationship building will be done with all students no matter remote or blended.
- ❖ Social emotional learning will be embedded in all subjects.
- ❖ Fully remote students will be assigned teachers from their schools.
- ❖ The number of staff at each school will be impacted by the teachers and aides that are seeking medical accommodations and request remote learning.
- ❖ There will be constant cleaning the entire time with people wiping down common surfaces, doorknobs, fountains, handrails.

And very important to everyone, a full schedule will be offered before the school year begins.

The DOE is preparing for a sense of readiness to move to fully remote learning if necessary. Naturally, there are lots of moving parts as we move forward. If you have questions please write them in the chat, or contact your Principal, [Superintendent Skop](#) or [CEC15](#), and we will try to get you the answers you need.

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