



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15

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

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April 16, 2024

Calendar and Business Meeting

President's Report - Antonia Ferraro Martinelli

D15 Musical - I attended a performance of the District 15 musical "Annie" on Saturday at the Brooklyn High School for the Arts. It was such an impressive performance. I saw glimmers of aspiring Ann Reinkings, Carol Burnetts and Bernadette Peters. The district wide work that our Superintendent's office does is so important for community building and mentoring across neighborhoods and age groups. These are the kind of positive experiences that children take with them into the future. When our council develops its budget for next year, I will propose that a line be added to support D15 student and family events.

Staff Appreciation Week - Please send some love to your school staff and teachers on Teacher and Staff appreciation week - May 6-10

Mayoral Control Report - Last week, the much anticipated Report on Mayoral Control was released. It is 281 pages, which I have yet to read, but I understand that the primary recommendation is that a task force be created to develop a new form of school governance. I understand from speaking with Sen. Jabari Brisport that the legislature will have to vote on this task force by June 6th. Speaking for myself, I hope this task force is created to explore a more democratic system of school governance. The majority of speakers in the hearings opposed the current state of Mayoral Control and supported some sort of change. Because it is unclear what that alternative would be, a commission to develop an alternative appropriate for the largest school system in the US is the appropriate way forward, in my view.

Add to chat:

<https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/mayoral-control-of-new-york-city-schools-final-report.pdf>

Division of Teaching and Learning - Since our last meeting you may have also read about the changes to the Division of Teaching and Learning that oversees the Chancellor's Literacy Initiative. Dep. Chan. Carolyn Quintana will be leaving at the end of the school year. The division will be dismantled and the responsibilities will transfer to the Division of School



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Leadership under Dep. Chan. Dr. Danika Rux. The Chancellor also suggested that work will be dispersed across the various districts.

My question to our Superintendent is - What impact will the dismantling of the Division of Teaching and Learning have on our District 15 office and our schools more broadly?

Add to chat:

<https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2024/03/25/nyc-disbands-education-department-division-of-teaching-and-learning/>

On April 3, CEC15 interviewed candidates for our vacant seat. I want to reiterate how impressive the candidates were. Thank you to Katina Rogers, Teresa Council, Jocelyn Bonadio de Freitas, Dana Ashley, and Yasman Yudeh who all eloquently answered questions for two hours. We will be voting later tonight to select one of them. I wish the council could offer a seat to each candidate, but unfortunately we can only select one. As always, I encourage everyone to stay involved in their schools and run in the CEC elections in Spring of 2025.

Holidays

April is National Arab American Heritage Month - I would like to briefly highlight Arab American, Christa McAuliffe who was a teacher and astronaut who sadly died in Challenger Mission in 1989. She was of Lebanese descent.

Passover begins before sundown on Monday, April 22, and concludes after nightfall on April 30. Another Fun Fact - Spring cleaning comes from the Jewish tradition to prepare the home for Passover.

May is National Jewish American Heritage Month and AAPI Month

April is Autism Awareness Month - This past Thursday, April 11 the PEP voted to approve new sites for 3 existing D75 schools in Queens D24, 29, and 30. Parents who spoke at the meeting lauded the new collocated sites. Across our city there has long been a dire need for local D75 seats, including ASD NEST and Horizons seats, Sensory Exploration, Education & Discovery (aka SEED pilot programs), and Path Programs so that children with special needs can attend schools in their neighborhoods. I think D75 collocations are the exception where collocation policy can make sense. D75 programs are often isolated but collocating them in



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buildings with gen ed schools creates the potential for inclusion, resource sharing and collaboration between the schools. I would challenge PTAs in schools collocated w/D75 programs to collaborate and advocate together.

Something we also need are after school programs staffed to meet the needs of students with IEPs. Many CBOs who provide these afterschool programs turn away students with special needs. The CEC is working with Janet Marte to understand the scope of this problem and will be developing recommendations through a resolution.

So tonight, I am happy to be here at PS 958, an inclusive school for children with special needs. This is a rare gem in NYC. From the inception, the school has been focused on inclusion. It was designed in response to the needs of the community, parents of special needs children who identified the injustice of having to bus their children out of the community. The design process incorporated feedback of groups like Vision Futuro. So I am pleased to introduce Principal Emily Shapiro to speak more about PS 958.