



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15

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May 13, 2025
Business Meeting

President's Report - Antonia Ferraro Martinelli

Welcome to CEC15's May Business meeting. We are here tonight in the District 15 Office at 131 Livingston St. **We have a great guest speaker tonight, Leonie Haimson from Class Size Matters. You may also be familiar with her radio show - *Talk Out of School*.**

But first some **Updates**

Last chance to vote in CEC Elections. Voting ends at Midnight tonight!

The voting period ran from **April 25 to May 13**. Please use your [NYCSA](#) account to vote. Videos of the Candidate forums that took place in March can be viewed [here](#). District 15 held two candidate forums so be sure to watch both.

Anyone who did not apply to run as a candidate or isn't elected can also [apply](#) to the Borough President for an appointment.

BP Application

<https://nycdoe.eballot.com/BPPA/en-BPApplicationForm>

Candidate Forums:

<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/get-involved/families/education-councils/elections/candidate-forums>

Check your NYCSA Account!!

https://www.schoolsaccount.nyc.gov/?link_id=2&can_id=5b2d0a9f37e91a08eccf05f58a403ad1&source=email-resolutions-workshop-today&email_referrer=email_2660047&email_subject=state-education-budget&&

CEC15 Vacancy

CEC15 currently has two vacancies on the council: one for the parent of an English Language Learner and another for the parent of a District 75 student.

Please apply to the DOE directly at CCECinfo@schools.nyc.gov. Do not submit the application to CEC15. Applications in nine languages and all information about eligibility to CECs can be found here. Please also visit CECd15.org to learn more about our organization.

Annual Evaluation of the Superintendent

One of CEC15's mandated duties is to evaluate the superintendent. The public is encouraged to participate in this annual evaluation and can provide feedback through [this form](#). All public feedback and CEC15 member feedback is submitted both to Superintendent Alvarez and the DOE.

<https://forms.gle/GTqvYhWMHc5DeaVt9>

DOE Responses to Resolutions

We received a response from the DOE to our CEC15 RESOLUTION TO DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY FROM THE SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

 CEC15 Response to Resolution on SCA.pdf

Hidden Voices: Jewish Americans in United States History Volume 1

May is Jewish history month. New York City Public Schools Chancellor Melissa Aviles-Ramos honored the month today by announcing the forthcoming publication of Hidden Voices: Jewish Americans in United States History Volume 1. This resource will be distributed to all schools for the 2025-26 school year, with five districts concurrently participating in a pilot to provide feedback and strengthen the use of these resources in the classroom. These materials are designed to be integrated with the Passport to Social Studies and Civics for All curricula.

This new curricular resource will feature a diverse array of Jewish Americans who have made important contributions to our city, country, and world, including:

- Asser Levy, one of the first Jewish settlers of the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam
- Levi Strauss, the developer of blue jeans worn by Gold Rush miners, cowboys, rebels, rock stars, presidents, and everyday men and women; and

- Ernestine Louise Rose, an abolitionist and a suffragist whose speeches led to a friendship with Frederick Douglass and who organized the first National Women's Rights Convention.

PEP April Meetings

The next PEP meeting is Wednesday, May 28 at 6pm at **Michael J. Petrides School** (715 Ocean Terrace, Staten Island, New York 10301) Speaker sign-up will begin at 5:30PM, at the door, and will close promptly at 6:15PM.

Whether you attend or not, you can **send written testimony to the 24 PEP members** using https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSezM7S0zfCMXb_BiXecJSnxsfl1E27CbCTwT0TflzuZbe3cAQ/viewform

Librarians Equal Literacy

Amazing news! Last week, on May 1, [INTRO 1125—THE LIBRARIANS COUNT BILL](#) passed with a unanimous vote in the NYC Council. This is a major win in restoring school librarians and libraries to all NYC schools. LEL is grateful to City Council Members, especially Lincoln Restler and Rita Joseph who introduced the bill and have been true champions for school libraries, Shahana Hanif who has been another incredible advocate and all of the other Council Members who supported, co-sponsored and voted to pass the bill.

They thank everyone who was able to attend the rally at City Hall to celebrate.

New York State Budget

Hochul's bell-to-bell [smartphone ban](#) in schools made it into the final budget. Chalkbeat has an [explainer](#) on what we know — and don't yet know — about how New York's recently-passed statewide cellphone ban will play out in New York City schools. While there are lots of details still to be worked out, state officials have given some hints about who will be exempt, guardrails around enforcement, and costs.

- Students who need their phones for language translation or caregiving responsibilities may qualify for exemptions.
- Phones without internet access are still allowed.
- And schools that allow students off campus for lunch can give students their phones when they're out of the building.
- Hochul allocated \$13.5 million to support local school districts to implement this ban, but the OMB estimates it will cost \$25 million in NYC alone.

Foundation Aid

Governor Hochul will invest at least \$37 billion toward education, but as a result of adjustments to the state's foundation aid formula, NYC will still receive hundreds of millions less than it would have received under the previous formula. NYC will receive more funding overall, but the initial proposal meant that NYC would receive \$350 million less than before the proposed changes. In the end, approximately \$30 million was restored by expanding the weight for English Language Learners, but the regional cost index for NYC was not adjusted, so NYC came up short. According to the article linked, only Westchester's regional cost index was adjusted.

<https://www.nydailynews.com/2025/05/08/new-formula-for-n-y-state-education-aid-turns-out-to-be-bad-news-for-nyc/>

https://www.cityandstateny.com/policy/2025/04/gov-kathy-hochul-announces-254-billion-state-budget-deal/404905/?oref=csny_alert_nl

NYC Budget

[Coalition for Equitable Education Funding](#) reports that the Mayor's Executive Budget, released this month, extends funding for a number of the education programs that had been at risk of cuts this July—providing long-term funding for programs such as 3-K, preschool special education classes, extended day 3-K and Pre-K seats, arts programming, community schools, teacher recruitment, and high-impact tutoring. However, the Executive Budget leaves out funding for Student Success Centers, putting the program at risk of being eliminated as soon as this July. Furthermore, the Executive Budget extends funding for other critical programs for one year only—putting these programs at risk of cuts, once again, in 2026—creating uncertainty for the communities they serve: summer programming, Learning to Work, restorative justice, the Mental Health Continuum, early childhood education outreach, and immigrant family communications and outreach. CEEF will advocate for the final city budget, expected at the end of June, to include long-term funding for these programs and to make additional investments that are needed to support students, with a focus on those who have the greatest needs. CEEF's updated city budget agenda is [online](#). Please join us for a rally on May 20th!

RALLY FOR EDUCATION FUNDING!

Please [register](#) to join the Coalition for Equitable Education Funding for a rally just before the City Council's education budget hearing!

Tuesday, May 20th

9-10am

Steps of City Hall

Register: <https://bit.ly/May20EducationRally>

AND TESTIFY ON THE NYC FY 2026 BUDGET!

New York City Council Committee on Finance and the Committee on Education will jointly hold a hearing May 20, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. on the Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 and the Executive Capital Plan for Fiscal Years 2025-2029. The hearing takes place in the Council Chambers, City Hall, New York, NY, and via Zoom web-conference.

The hearing is posted online here: [Committee on Education Executive Budget Hearing, May 20, 2025, 10:00 a.m.](https://council.nyc.gov/testify/)

You are hereby invited to attend and testify, either in-person at City Hall Council Chambers or via Zoom videoconferencing.

If you are planning to testify in-person or via Zoom, please register in advance of the hearing at <https://council.nyc.gov/testify/>. As registrations are on an individual basis, each person intending to provide testimony will need to submit a separate registration (i.e. not as a group).

If you plan to testify in person, it would be greatly appreciated if you could bring twenty (20) double-sided copies of your written testimony to the hearing;

Due to anticipated turnout, we ask you please RSVP as early as possible. Please be advised that all who wish to testify in person must fill out a witness slip with the Sergeant-At-Arms upon arrival in the hearing room on the day of the hearing.

Written testimony may be submitted without registration by emailing it to totestimony@council.nyc.gov or via the Council's website at <https://council.nyc.gov/testify/> up to seventy-two (72) hours after the close of the hearing.

The entrance to the hearing and restrooms at City Hall are fully accessible. All questions regarding accessibility or to request additional accommodations, please contact Nicole Benjamin (NBenjamin@council.nyc.gov or 212-482-5176) at least seventy-two (72) hours before the hearing.

Mayor announces After School for All

Adams said he plans to expand after-school care to 20,000 students in kindergarten through fifth grade over the next three years. The mayor's executive budget will include \$331 million for the initiative, bringing total spending on after-school to \$755 million. The investment will ramp up in the coming years, with an additional \$21 million for 5,000 new seats next fall. The programs will eventually serve 184,000 children in kindergarten through eighth grade, according to officials.

<https://gothamist.com/news/mayor-adams-pitches-after-school-for-all-as-nyc-mayoral-race-heats-up>

Participatory Budgeting Update

Shahana Hanif's Office announced PB grant winners

Capital Projects

1. PS 282 (District 13) Bathroom Renovations – \$450,000 (4,004 votes)
2. Prospect Park Historic Willink Restroom Restoration – \$500,000 (3,690 votes)
3. John Jay Library Revamp into Media Hub – \$450,000 (3,639 votes)

Expense Projects

1. Free Summer Arts for Low-Income Kindergartners – \$10,000 (3,466 votes)
2. Youth Voice For Justice: Training Students in Conflict Resolution – \$20,000 (2,588 votes)
3. Launch Women-Owned Businesses in Kensington – \$12,000 (2,540 votes)

Borough Hall 2025 Graduation Awards

Brooklyn Borough President, Antonio Reynoso is happy to announce the release of Borough Hall's 2025 Graduation Awards. If you are a Brooklyn Public school, charter, or private school, please [apply here](#) to nominate students. This year's awards celebrate students' academic achievement as well as other qualities that we should be fostering more in our communities. There are three awards:

- The Merit Award is given to a student who has demonstrated outstanding academic achievement across subjects.
 - The Perseverance Award is given to a student who has overcome challenges to improve in their academics and/or achieve graduation.
 - The Brooklyn for All Award is given to a student who has demonstrated a spirit of generosity among their peers and/or within their Brooklyn community.
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- Submissions for graduation awards will be open until **Thursday, May 29, 2025** at 5:00 PM EST. Duplicate entries will be discarded. Schools must ensure that all information provided is accurate, especially the spelling of names.
 - Awards will be delivered by the week of **June 9, 2025**. Private Schools, Charter Schools, District 75, New Visions, Transfer Schools, and Urban Assembly public schools will be able to pick up their awards at Brooklyn Borough Hall. All other public schools will be able to pick up their awards at their Superintendent's office.

- If you're interested in inviting Borough President Reynoso to your graduation, please [submit this form](#). Submitting the form does not guarantee the Borough President's presence, but someone will confirm his availability and attendance in the coming weeks.

If you have any questions in the interim, please do not hesitate to contact Donovan Swanson, Director of Programs and Education Engagement at donavan.swanson@brooklynbp.nyc.gov.

And finally, in my continuing segment called, **Federal Government Watch**

Trump Cuts Mental Health Programs

After the 2022 school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle agreed to finance additional mental health support for students across the country. But the Trump administration is now clawing back some of the funds, including a Teachers College initiative to provide free mental health services in some Harlem and East Harlem schools. [Read more about the cuts](#).

Update on Covid Relief Funds

Recall that New York is part of a group of 17 states [suing the federal government](#) over Education Secretary Linda McMahon's decision to cut off hundreds of millions in COVID aid that school districts were expecting to have through next year to spend.

I have some **good news**. A [federal judge ordered](#) the Department of Education to restore access to more than \$1 billion across the 17 states that sued, while the lawsuit plays out in court. This means for now, New York can count on receiving \$134 million that the state had planned to spend on programs to help homeless youth, facilities repairs, additional classroom space, as well as additional library books, playground equipment, and wheelchair-accessible buses.

That concludes my updates. Welcome Leonie Haimson.