



## COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15

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January 18, 2022

Chancellor David C. Banks  
New York City Department of Education  
Tweed Courthouse  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chancellor Banks,

Happy New Year! Welcome to your new role as Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education! We hope to have the opportunity to meet you in-person, pandemic permitting, in District 15 Brooklyn. As such a date may be far off, the Community Education Council of District 15 sends this letter to introduce you to our district and share some issues we prioritize.

CEC15 might best be defined as a body of empowered parents. We come from all corners of a district that encompasses the neighborhoods of Sunset Park, Park Slope, Kensington, Windsor Terrace, Red Hook, Gowanus, Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill, and Boerum Hill. Our professional backgrounds are as diverse as our personal backgrounds. We work in fields ranging from social work to film, teaching to interior design. We have members who attended New York City public schools, or have family members who are NYC public school teachers; while others come from different parts of the country and the world. Whatever our backgrounds, we are all invested in District 15 children.

That investment in public education is our bond across neighborhoods, as education is one of the few resources powerful enough to foster community. Public education policies can be designed to build bonds as well as individual achievement if we choose to design them with community as a goal. Too often though, education policy prioritizes the kind of competition that reinforces class stratification. We want that to end.

CEC 15 believes that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion should be at the forefront of planning throughout the city. Under the leadership and in collaboration with Superintendent Skop, District 15 championed work in school desegregation through unprecedented community engagement processes such as the D15 Diversity Plan and Participatory Action Research employed in a

recent rezoning of our elementary schools. D15 schools also strive to forge curricula inclusive of all students and their identities while ensuring academic and social-emotional needs are met. We were excited to hear you reference our work to unscreen middle schools through the D15 Diversity Plan, as a model for the city. We are honored to participate in this citywide effort.

Like most councils, ours does not always agree on everything, but CEC15 works to maintain a council that is an open forum for an informed, civil, and respectful discussion on a myriad of education issues, such as:

- Citywide pediatric vaccination rates are woefully low and many parents have not consented to testing. We are currently exploring ways that the DOE could address vaccine and testing mandates for students;
- Enrollment declines in D15 and citywide have been accelerated by the pandemic. We are discussing how reduced enrollment will impact our schools beyond 2022;
- We would like the DOE to ensure all of our students benefit from school-wide enrichment;
- We are looking at ways that high stakes tests enable citywide segregation and tracking;
- We wonder why “no-excuses” charter schools do not follow state disciplinary laws;
- We would like to see safety agents and schools forge a partnership that serves the whole child;
- Given the tremendous backlog of Carter Cases, we wonder how students with learning disabilities, like Dyslexia, can be appropriately served within DOE schools;
- We are curious as to whether a remote learning option could ever provide an equivalent education;
- And, like you, we seek to improve the ways in which our public schools can effectively promote all the outstanding work they do everyday.

Chancellor Banks, we invite you to join us in these discussions. You know our city. You know our schools. You know our children. You know there are no shortcuts to providing quality education and it is possible to do innovative things within the traditional public system. Fully-resourced schools must be accessible to all because every child deserves an excellent, enriched education, especially those with the most needs.

You also know engaged parents are critically important to student progress. We at CEC15 aim to continue the hard work of redesigning our school system to prioritize Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in partnership with you. We are ready to work toward these goals together. We are confident you share our enthusiasm and we endeavor to collaborate with you to make our schools the best they can be for each and every student.

We look forward to meeting you and delving deeper in this work. If possible, we would like to schedule a meeting or Town Hall with you at your earliest convenience.

Congratulations again on your new role as NYC School Chancellor!

Sincerely,

CEC15



**Members:** President Camille Casaretti, Co-Vice President Antonia Ferraro Martinelli, Co-Vice President Ivan Jaime Banda - BP Appointee, Treasurer Alfred De Ingeniis, Parliamentarian Joseph Alexander, Nana-Poku Agyekum - IEP Representative, Vincent Lu - ELL Representative, Tia Schellsteder, Nancy Randall - BP Appointee, Jared Moser - Student Representative