



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15

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

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March 26, 2024
Calendar Meeting

President's Report - Antonia Ferraro Martinelli

Good evening everyone. Thank you all for joining us. We are here at PS 230 under the leadership of Principal Maria Della Ragione.

I wish Ramadan Kareem to our Muslim families. The holiday continues through April 9th. I hope our Jewish families enjoyed their hamantaschen this weekend during Purim. Yesterday many South Asian families celebrated Dolo Jatra and Holi, the festival of colors. And Happy Easter in advance of Sunday, March 31. The spring holidays are truly endless. (I will begin making my wheat pies or Pastiera Napoletana this week.)

March has been a very busy Month:

*On Mar 13 I attended the **District 15 PB/SEM Share Fair** - Brooklyn Army Terminal. I was so impressed by all the projects. Our students were asking big questions and seeking to solve the seemingly intractable problems of our time. Issues were being explored through **multiple modes and lenses**. For instance, middle schoolers at **MS 442 were researching the 6th Amendment**, which is the right to a speedy trial and legal representation. Through their **research** they developed an opinion that there is a scarcity of public defenders. They developed a **plan to advocate** for more public defenders through a **podcast**. That's just the tip of the iceberg.*

Other projects:

Examining trauma and racism through August Wilson's play Fences

Climate Change

1st Amendment

Diets, Health and Sustainability -Diabetes & Mushrooms

Recycling

Wind Energy

Art for Social Change

Learning to Teach through Crochet

Website and Business Development: Cookie Business & Dermatology - Skin-Ventory

*I viewed the **City Council Education Budget Hearing on (3/18)**:*



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Some highlights from the Testimony of the Chancellor and SCA:

- *Ed Chair Rita Joseph asked the Chancellor about **Connors and Carter Cases**.*

Connors case are when the DOE agrees to pay for a private special ed school directly

Carter cases are when the DOE agrees to reimburse a family for the cost of private special ed school

*In 2024 there are 23,000 combined **Connors and Carter Cases***

These cases amount to \$1.2 billion - 114% percent increase in 4 years

2 buckets -

- 1. students seeking education in private special ed schools*
- 2. The dramatic increase was driven mostly by due process cases for services. These were students with special needs in parochial or independent schools seeking SETTS services. These cases quadrupled.*

- *Ed Chair Rita Joseph also asked about NYPD in schools. NYCPD has the largest school police force in the nation. The cost of **NYPD in schools** is \$400 million. 4,126 SS Agents with 492 vacant police positions. At the hearing, CM Joseph asked if the Chancellor would replace these vacant positions with **social workers and psychologists** to which Chancellor Banks replied that he treads lightly on eliminating security positions but considers all options on the table.*

- *On the Chopping block due to **loss of Covid Relief Funds***

***Restorative justice programs** that relied on \$8 million in Federal Stimulus Funding and **Project Pivot**, which relied on \$15 million in Stimulus.*

- *Teen and Young Adult **new arrivals** are having difficulty enrolling in schools. Those that are being directed to Adult Ed programs or D79 programs are being told that there is no space. Dept. Chancellor Wiesburg explained that there is an issue of geography. The programs nearest to the student do not have seats.*

- *Also on the Chopping block due to loss of Covid Relief Funds*

***Learn to Work (LTW) programs**, a model that works for youth and potential pathway for migrants*

- *CM Gale Brewer asked about **Charter spending***

According to Deputy Chancellor Dan Weisburg, current Charter school per pupil spending is \$3.2 billion. And another \$235 million goes to charter rent.

- *A frustrated Lincoln Rester questioned **SCA about improvement timelines and inaccurate estimates**. He demanded process improvements. He takes their estimates seriously but they are always incorrect. SCA offered to prioritize funding for scoping projects.*



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- Chair Rita Joseph highlighted that it will take 20 years to meet the **accessibility** requirements under federal law. 436 school buildings remain inaccessible to students and staff with disabilities. However, SCA expects to positively impact 70-75 buildings with the allocation of \$800 million. If they received additional funding from the city, they could bring an additional 30 buildings to full accessibility.
- SCA identified the impact of **Inflation** on the cost of school construction, but also supply chain issues and various legislation that makes new capacity costly, such as bird friendly glass. The average construction costs in 2021 were \$710 per sq. ft. In 2022 they rose to \$905 per sq. ft. and remain close to that now.

Committee Meetings

Last week CEC15 held **two committee meetings**. We **Communications Committee** meeting to collaborate with parents on a **Hate Speech Resolution**. We continue to refine that resolution and hope to post it on an agenda in April or May. We also convened a **Legislative Committee** meeting to collaborate on a resolution to ensure **students with IEPs and learning disabilities receive a continuum of appropriate support in afterschool programs**. These were really important conversations and I thank the families who participated for entrusting the CEC with these complex topics.

Last week I had the pleasure of attending a **round table discussion with Borough President Antonio Reynoso and Council Member Shahana Hanif**. We discussed issues related to public health, safety, housing, and of course education. Our partners from **Safe Streets** were there and they were thrilled to learn that we passed the **Universal Daylighting Resolution**. Various community boards have also passed the resolution and they are eager to have more CECs pass it as well.

Yesterday, **CEC15 and the D15 PTA Presidents' Council held their fourth joint meeting**. We discussed the logistics of our upcoming CEC15 Candidate interviews. The Presidents' Council will submit questions and participate in the interview process. Parents were also given the floor to express concerns about the phase-in of the new Literacy Plan. We will be learning more about that tonight.

I want to highlight some upcoming events:

Next Wed. Apr. 3 6:30 pm - CEC15 Candidate Interviews - 131 Livingston St. Rm 301 CEC15 and the Presidents' Council will interview candidates. The council will vote to seat a new member on April 16 at our Calendar/Business Meeting at PS 958 - 840 5th Ave.

Save the Date: Participatory Budgeting Vote Week is 4/6 - 4/14

This year's PB vote week kicks off on April 6th and will wrap up on April 14th. Everyone ages 11 and up is eligible to vote on the projects, regardless of citizenship or voter registration status. Students and



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Teachers can vote on these projects even if they don't reside in the council district of their school. There will be paper ballots at community poll sites and you'll also be able to vote online! Check with your City Council member for more information on how to volunteer at poll sites.