

COMMUNITY  
EDUCATION  
COUNCIL  
DISTRICT 31

Dr. Roderick Palton  
District Superintendent

OFFICERS

Lucia Curatolo-Boylan  
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1st Vice President

Frank Marino  
2nd Vice President

Andrew Guido  
Recording Secretary

Joseph Bird  
Treasurer  
IEP Representative

Amanda Wolkowitz  
D75 Representative

Daniella Caputo  
Teresa Circelli  
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Appointees

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STUDENT MEMBERS  
Jordan Dale  
Mia Perez

VACANT  
ELL Representative  
D31 Representative  
D31 Representative  
Parliamentarian  
Administrative Assistant



CEC 31 Hybrid Business Meeting and Calendar  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday April 7th, 2025

**Business Meeting**

- **Call to Order** at 6:39 PM and welcomed by President Lucia Curatolo-Boylan

- **Welcomed interpretation services** in Russian, Mandarin, and Spanish

- **Roll call of Members**

*In-Person:* Lucia Curatolo-Boylan, James Desiderato, Andrew Guido, Frank Marino, Amanda Wolkowitz, Teresa Circelli, Melissa Cosentino, Joseph Bird, Daniella Caputo, Mia Perez & Jordan Dale

- **Approval March & April Draft Business Meeting Minutes**

Due to unforeseen circumstances March minutes are unavailable. Motion to postpone approval the May CEC Meeting

**Motion 1st:** James Desiderato

**Motion 2nd:** Melissa Cosentino

- **Review of Letter Petitioning Early Voting School Siting Letter**

**Letter was read publicly:**

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UTabyjRe9OTtTgq\\_2v\\_ndtU\\_bP9uMmVCUI19pGMgL2M/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UTabyjRe9OTtTgq_2v_ndtU_bP9uMmVCUI19pGMgL2M/edit?usp=sharing)

**Council Feedback:** None

**Letter will be distributed**

**Community Support:** Send a copy of the following letter to by email to [secors@nyassembly.gov](mailto:secors@nyassembly.gov) and [boresa@nyassembly.gov](mailto:boresa@nyassembly.gov) or mail to Assembly Member Alex Bores Attn: Sophia Sector LOB 431 Albany 12248

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1t9Q4etQZpt2wrB9yUOJoRlLjLF7\\_nI\\_hy/edit?usp=sharing&oid=110570760223382943020&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1t9Q4etQZpt2wrB9yUOJoRlLjLF7_nI_hy/edit?usp=sharing&oid=110570760223382943020&rtpof=true&sd=true)

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• **President's Report**

- **2025 CEC Elections:** Campaign season is underway. Voting will occur from late April through May 13 via each parent's NYC Schools Account (NYCSA). Households must ensure each voting member has their own NYCSA account. Contact your school's Parent Coordinator if you need help accessing or creating your NYCSA Account
- **Candidate Information:** Profiles for all 44 candidates and a recording of the March 27 candidate forum are available online. All current CEC members are running for re-election.
  1. <https://apps.schools.nyc/cecprofiles/CandidateListByDistrict/31>
  2. <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/get-involved/families/education-councils/elections/candidate-forums>
- **PEP Parent Representative Seats:** Applications are open for one parent representative per borough on the Panel for Education Policy (PEP) for the 2025–2026 school year. Deadline is April 15. Former council member Venus Sze Tsang is not running again. <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/get-involved/families/panel-for-education-policy/panel-general-elections>
- **Nominating Committee:** One more council member is needed to join the nominating committee for PEP candidate selection.
- **School Relocation Update:** A public hearing was held on the proposed relocation of the Young Women's Leadership School from R080 to R124. The community and school support the move. The proposal will be voted on by the PEP.
- **Spring 2025 Citywide Conference:** Scheduled for Saturday, April 26, 2025, from 8 AM to 3 PM. Open to school and district leadership teams, parent leaders, students, and community members. Registration is at [nycpscommunities.org](http://nycpscommunities.org).

• **Councilmember Reports**

None

• **New Business for next month's agenda**

- **Disciplinary Code Review and Resolution Proposal**
  - Jimmy Desiderato raised concerns that the NYC Department of Education's *Citywide Behavioral Expectations to Support Student Learning* (Discipline Code) has not been updated since 2019.
  - Proposed drafting a resolution requesting a review and update of the code.
  - Called for a clearer understanding of the amendment process, Lucia Curatolo-Boylan notes that changes to Chancellor's Regulations typically require feasibility studies and task forces and is a lengthy process
  - A resolution would be the first step toward initiating this process, followed by feedback from the Chancellor's team.
- **Safety Transfers and School Inundation**
  - Mr. Desiderato highlighted ongoing issues with safety transfers, describing them as a means of shifting disciplinary problems from one school to another without addressing root causes.

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- He cited data from IS 72 and MAELS, which each received over 30 such transfers, impacting safety and climate.
- Requested a meeting with Paul Helfman greater accountability and transparency in placement procedures.
- Superintendent Dr. Roderick Palton responded, explaining that many of the recent transfers cited were not safety transfers but general reassignments from charter schools due to available seats.
- He acknowledged the issues raised and agreed to invite Mr. Helfman to a future council meeting to address these concerns directly.
- Council members discussed the need for better clerical tracking of students' behavioral records and conflict histories to avoid placing students with known issues or rivalries in the same schools.
- Emphasis was placed on improving transparency and fairness in placement, especially in smaller or specialized schools.
- **School Performance Monitoring Proposal**
  - Joseph Bird proposed that the Council regularly review progress updates on the district's five lowest-performing schools
  - The intention is to increase visibility, foster broader accountability, and give school leaders additional support and motivation.
  - This item will be followed up with the district to determine a feasible implementation plan.

● **Motion to Adjourn**

**Motion 1st:** *Joseph Bird*

**Motion 2nd:** *Daniela Caputo*

● **Meeting Adjourned 7:10 pm**

**Calendar Meeting**

- **Call to Order** at 7:33PM and welcomed by President Lucia Curatolo-Boylan

- **Welcomed interpretation services** in Russian, Mandarin, and Spanish

● **Roll call of Members**

*In-Person: Lucia Curatolo-Boylan, James Desiderato, Andrew Guido, Frank Marino, Amanda Wolkowitz, Teresa Circelli, Melissa Cosentino, Joseph Bird, Daniella Caputo, Mia Perez & Jordan Dale*

● **Approval March Draft Business Meeting Minutes**

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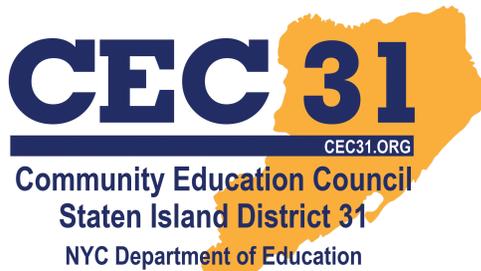
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**Motion 1st:** *Teresa Cirelli*

**Motion 2nd:** *Andrew Guido*

• **Presentations**

**Mental Health Awareness Presentation**

**Guest Speaker: Dr. Krista Labouliere - Director at NYS Psychiatric Institute at Columbia University & NYS Office of Mental Health**

- **Welcome and Purpose**
  - Dr. Krista Labouliere was introduced and welcomed for a discussion on bullying, suicide prevention, and youth mental wellness.
  - Emphasis placed on the community's shared responsibility in safeguarding children's mental health.
- **Youth Mental Health Crisis**
  - Dramatic increases in mental health concerns among youth, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - 140% increase in suicide attempts among children ages 9–12.
  - 60–70% increase among teenagers and young adults
- **Mental health challenges are not limited to professionals—parents, teachers, and community members all play vital roles.**
- **Warning Signs and Intervention (F.A.C.T.S. Acronym)**

**Dr. Labouliere presented a practical tool for identifying youth in distress:**

  - Feelings: Persistent sadness, hopelessness, anxiety.
  - Actions: Risk-taking or sudden behavior changes.
  - Changes: Academic or behavioral shifts.
  - Thoughts: Verbal hints or direct statements about death or suicide.
  - Situations: Stressful life events, bullying, family conflict.
- **Resources and handouts were mentioned to assist community members in recognizing and responding to these signs. Support Resources Available**
  - 988 Crisis Hotline available nationwide for both youth and concerned adults.
  - Local mental health services on Staten Island—many are free and accessible.
  - Encouragement to seek help early, not rely on misinformation or peers for guidance.
- **Video Presentation**
  - A short video by the Mayo Clinic was shared, featuring youth voices on what they wish adults knew about mental health struggles.
  - Reinforced the importance of asking directly about suicidal thoughts and approaching conversations with compassion and openness.
- **Community Involvement and Call to Action**
  - Dr. Labouliere emphasized the role of every adult in suicide prevention.
  - Highlighted a \$3.7 million federal suicide prevention grant being implemented on Staten Island in collaboration with D31, local hospitals, and community partners.
  - Community feedback and involvement were encouraged to help tailor efforts effectively.
- **Upcoming Mental Health Symposium**

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- Second Annual Youth Mental Health Symposium
  - Date: May 20th
  - Location: Hilton Garden Inn, Staten Island
  - Open to: Students, parents, educators, administrators, and community members.
  - A day filled with panels, workshops, and resources aimed at improving youth mental wellness.
  - Flyer and registration info to be shared via chat and email.

• **President's Report**

**Council Representation**

- **Vacancies remain for:**
  - 1 English Language Learner (ELL) Representative
  - 3 District 31 Representative seats

**CCEC Elections**

- Campaign season is active; voting is open until **May 13, 2025**
- Candidate profiles available at: [Candidate List by District](#)
- **All current members are running for re-election**
- View the **D31 Candidate Forum** (March 27): [Watch here](#)

**PEP Elections**

- **Applications open** for 5 seats on the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) for the 2025–2026 year
- Deadline to apply: **April 15, 2025**
- Info and application: [PEP General Elections](#)

**DEI Compliance**

- NY State **refuses federal order** to eliminate DEI programs
- Officials argue state complies with existing anti-discrimination laws; no legal grounds exist to dismantle DEI initiatives

**State Education Budget**

- Dispute over Governor Hochul's plan to **cut \$350M** from NYC school funding
- Contention centers on outdated poverty metrics and lack of adjustments for NYC's cost of living
- **Advocates demand** more funding for ELLs, students with disabilities, and students in temporary housing

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NYCPS Teacher Hiring

- Plan to hire **7,000–9,000 teachers** to meet class size reduction mandates by 2028
- **750 schools applied** for funding to hire 4,000 additional teachers
- Early guaranteed funding is expected to **accelerate recruitment**

School Libraries

- Only **16% of NYC schools have certified librarians**
- **“Librarians Count” initiative** advocates for annual reporting on librarian access
- Support urged for April 8, 10:00 AM City Council testimony
  - More info: [Library Bill Details](#)

Summer Rising

- Offers available starting **April 24** for families who applied by March 28
- Families should only accept if students will attend most of the program

Gifted & Talented (G&T) Admissions

- Applications open for Grades 1–4 G&T programs for the 2025–26 school year
- Eligibility notifications will be sent via **MySchools**

Admissions Updates

- **Kindergarten Offers:** Released April 2, 2025
- **Middle School Offers:** To be released April 9, 2025

Standardized Testing

- **ELA Grades 3–8:**
  - CBT: April 22 – May 2
  - PBT: April 29 – 30
  - Make-ups: May 1 – 6
- **NYSELAT:**
  - Speaking: April 14 – May 23
  - Other sections: May 12 – 23

NYCPS Cares Initiative

- New initiatives include:
  - **Anti-bullying and anti-vaping campaigns**
  - **Family Connectors:** Bridging families with school resources
  - Sign up to become a Family Connector: Sign Up Form

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**Community Events**

- **North Shore Rotary Cinderella-Fella Project**
  - Dates: April 7–9 at Rab's Bowling Alley
  - Free formal wear for students in need
- **Resource Fair for Individuals with Disabilities**
  - **Date:** Friday, May 2, 2025, 9:30 AM–12:30 PM
  - **Location:** JCC, 1466 Manor Road, Staten Island, NY
  - Services include education, legal advice, recreation, and therapies

● **Superintendent's Report**

- **Superintendent Hiring formally announced**
  - Superintendent Palton expressed deep appreciation for community outreach through emails, texts, calls, and a surprise celebration.
  - He emphasized his passion for working with students, stating they are the core of his purpose in education.
- **Mental Health**
  - Encouraged students and families to speak openly about mental health and seek support, noting that grief and vulnerability are natural and necessary.
  - Reinforced the importance of access to mental health resources and ongoing conversations.
- **Awareness on Online Safety and Abuse**
  - Addressed serious concerns around cyberbullying, sextortion, and digital exploitation of students.
  - Plans are underway to partner with the District Attorney's Office for a presentation on these issues at the May 20th Symposium.
  - Emphasis placed on understanding the legal consequences for perpetrators and educating families and students about prevention and reporting.
- **Recognition and Positivity in Schools.**
  - Highlighted recent uplifting messages from families celebrating school leaders and student achievements.
  - Shared a story of a student featured in the Staten Island Advance for his advocacy work, showcasing the district's talent and community engagement.
  - Encouraged balance—recognizing both complaints and celebrations to maintain perspective.
- **State Testing Participation**
  - Reiterated the importance of student participation in statewide assessments, especially for students with IEPs.
  - Test data is critical for measuring performance, identifying needs, and guiding instruction.
  - Assured students that testing results do not affect class grades; encouraged them to do their best without stress.
  - Quote: *"Don't stress the test—just do your best."*

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- **Looking Ahead**

- Superintendent Palton acknowledged the hard work ahead as the school year winds down and preparations begin for next year
- Assured continued dedication to meaningful and challenging work on behalf of the district's students and families.

- **Committee Reports - None**

- **Public Speaking - No Speakers**

- **New Business**

Suggestion that the PEP Parent Representative for Staten Island provide a monthly update on all things PEP at our Calendar Meetings. Next PEP Meeting will be held on May 28th in the Auditorium at Petrides

- **Old Business**

**Review of Parental Concerns from P.S. 8 at the March CEC Meeting**

- Dr. Palton reported meeting with concerned parents regarding the issue involving a student occurred
- He clarified that while he could not override existing DOE policy, he focused on what is within his control: providing support structures for the school and staff to manage student needs.
- The principal developed a plan to improve school wide support systems, not just for the individual student in question but for all students.
- Ongoing initiatives include:
  - Implementation of TCIS (Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools) training for staff.
  - Creation of a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.
  - Exploration of interventions to enhance classroom safety and learning for all.
- Jimmy Desiderato emphasized that such behavioral challenges are not isolated and have occurred across multiple schools.
  - Stressed the importance of developing a long-term strategy and asked: "What can be done systemically to prevent these issues from recurring?"
- Palton highlighted the importance of addressing the root causes of challenging behavior, advocating for a strength-based, solution-oriented approach.
  - Emphasized the need to support all students, not just relocate problems from one school to another.

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- Reinforced that safe learning environments are crucial, but also that schools reflect broader society, and students must be taught and supported, not discarded.
- Equity vs. Accountability Debate
  - Lucia Curatolo-Boylan expressed concern that while every child should feel supported, the current system sometimes sacrifices the safety and learning of the majority for the needs of one student.
  - There was frustration over a perceived lack of accountability mechanisms, and a call for systemic changes to better balance support and consequences.
  - Suggestions were made to bring in decision-makers to re-evaluate existing policies, such as around safety transfers and student placements.
  - While district leaders acknowledged their limitations within current policy, there was collective agreement that greater advocacy, policy reform, and cross-stakeholder collaboration are needed.
  - The conversation ended with a mutual understanding of the complexity of the issue and the necessity for continued dialogue and systemic change.

● **Motion to Adjourn**

**Motion 1st:** *Frank Marino*

**Motion 2nd:** *Amanda Wolkowitz*

● **Meeting Adjourned 8:08 pm**