

COMMUNITY  
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COUNCIL  
DISTRICT 31

Dr. Roderick Palton  
District Superintendent

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Frank Marino  
2nd Vice President

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**VACANT**  
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**CEC 31 Hybrid Business Meeting and Calendar  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday December 2nd, 2024**

**Business Meeting**

- **Call to Order** at 6:40PM and welcomed by President Lucia Curatolo-Boylan
- **Welcomed interpretation services** in Russian, Mandarin, and Spanish
- **Roll call of Members - In-Person:**

*Lucia Curatolo-Boylan, Daniella Caputo, Melissa Cosentino, Joseph Bird, Amanda Wolkowitz, Frank Marino, Teresa Circelli, Andrew Guido*

**Virtual:** *James Desiderato*

**Absent:** *None*

- **Approval November Draft Business Meeting Minutes**

The minutes from the November meeting were presented and approved.

**Motion 1st:** *Andrew Guido*

**Motion 2nd:** *Melissa Cosentino*

- **President's Report:**

**Council Seat Updates:**

- Three seats are available for District 31 parent representatives (including an ELL parent representative).
- An application is under review pending FACE guidance.

**CEC President's meeting with Chancellor Aviles-Ramos Meeting Highlights:**

- Commitment to teacher support, professional development, and student wellness.
- Addressed concerns about potential defunding of the DOE and asylum-seeking families.
- NYC Public Schools are trying to safeguard federal funds for Title 1 and providing resources for legal rights of asylum seekers.
- Addressed special education, teacher shortages, and busing issues.

**Key Updates from Deputy Chancellor Foti:**

- Efforts to address para and special education teacher shortages include tuition incentives and partnerships with colleges.
- Improving assessments and interventions for students scoring below the 16% marker.
- Case-by-case handling of Staten Island busing issues due to program needs beyond the 1.7-mile guideline.
- De-escalation training for staff and parents in schools with elevated level of 411 calls to address special needs students' behavioral incidents.

**IESP and Services Advocacy:**

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- NYC Public Schools exploring a voucher system for families who filed late for services.
- CEC31 continues to advocate for restored services and encourages meetings with elected officials.

**District Updates:**

- K-8 principals are submitting project requests for the FY2025 capital plan; deadline is December 20.
- Tentative dates for fair student funding budget presentations and public hearings set for February-April.

**Community Engagement:**

- Meetings for appointing the next district superintendent postponed to early January; members to provide availability.
- Chancellor's borough listening tour event scheduled for December 17 at Curtis High School, Staten Island all D31 & D75 encouraged to attend

**Action Items for Council Members:**

- Remind liaison schools K-8 to submit capital plan requests by December 20.
- Email availability for superintendent engagement meetings (January 6–17).

**• Councilmember Reports**

CEC31 and the District Team will host a bullying workshop on Wednesday, January 22, at 5:30 PM. The workshop will educate students and parents on the definition of bullying, steps to take if their child is a victim, and strategies to reduce bullying in schools. Food will be provided.

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

None

**• Motion to Adjourn**

**Motion 1st:** *Melissa Cosentino*

**Motion 2nd:** *Daniella Caputo*

**• Meeting Adjourned 6:52pm**

**Calendar Meeting**

- **Call to Order** at 7:30PM and welcomed by President Lucia Curatolo-Boylan
- **Welcomed interpretation services** in Russian, Mandarin, and Spanish
- **Roll call of Members:** *Lucia Curatolo-Boylan, Daniella Caputo, Melissa Cosentino, Amanda Wolkowitz, Joseph Bird, Teresa Cirelli, Andrew Guido, Frank Marino*
- Virtual:** *James Desiderato*
- Absent:** *None*

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• **Approval of November Calendar Meeting Minutes**

The minutes from the November meeting were presented and approved.

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

**Motion 2nd:** *Frank Marino*

• **Presentations:**

**Presenter:** **Haya Doleh**, Regional Coordinator, Parent to Parent of New York State

**Overview:** Parent to Parent is a nonprofit organization supporting families and professionals with resources and information about disabilities. The unique aspect of the organization is that its team members are also parents of individuals with disabilities, providing both professional and personal support.

**Key Services Offered:**

1. **Information and Referrals:** Resources for families and professionals, free of charge.
2. **One-on-One Support:** Available via phone or email.
3. **Education and Training:** Webinars on special education, OPWDD services, and disability-related topics.
4. **Parent Matching:** Connecting families with similar experiences for peer support.
5. **Community Engagement:** Building connections and facilitating activities within the disability community.

**Trainings Available:**

- Special education basics
- Understanding Section 504
- Transition planning and diploma options for students with disabilities
- Assistive technology for communication

**Regional Support:**

- Staten Island office located at 1050 Forest Hill Road, Willowbrook compound.
- Services are statewide with regional offices providing tailored support.

**Additional Information:**

- All services are free, funded primarily by OPWDD.
- Families do not need an IEP to access services, only proof of a disability.
- Contact information and webinar schedules are available on the Parent to Parent website and CEC31.org.

**Community Feedback:**

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- Parent to Parent has been a vital resource for families, offering consistent and helpful support across leadership changes.

**Action Items:**

- Parents and professionals are encouraged to contact Parent to Parent for assistance or training needs.
- Visit the Parent to Parent website for webinar schedules and further details.

**Q&A Highlights:**

- Services are accessible to families regardless of the type of school or district.
- Parent to Parent remains committed to supporting families with any disability-related needs.

**Topic:** Presentation of the 2025-2029 Five-Year Capital Plan

**Presenter:** Steve Gonzalez, Regional Manager for Borough Development and External Affairs & Dwight Clark, Senior Project Officer for the School Construction Authority

- 1. Key Highlights of the 2025-2029 Capital Plan:**
  - **Total Budget:** \$20.5 billion.
  - **Capacity Program:** \$6.9 billion allocated for new schools and related infrastructure.
  - **Healthy Schools Initiatives:** Includes upgrades for athletic fields, cafeterias, and clean energy projects.
  - **Capital Improvements:** \$7.54 billion for existing school building upgrades such as masonry, roofs, windows, and compliance projects.
  - **Mandated Programs:** \$3.72 billion for asbestos and lead abatement, code compliance, and insurance policies.
- 2. Citywide Priorities:**
  - Electrification of school buildings (\$1.4 billion).
  - Technology upgrades (\$1.25 billion) for smart boards and classroom enhancements.
  - Accessibility improvements (\$800 million) for elevator installations.
  - Physical education space upgrades (\$40 million).
  - Cafeteria renovations and playground redevelopments.
- 3. District 31 Capacity Highlights:**
  - **Current and Upcoming Projects:**
    - PS 5 addition: 290 seats, opening September 2025.
    - New K-8 school on Shelley Avenue: Opening September 2025.
    - PS 13 annex: Opening September 2027.
    - Largest project: St. John Villa Campus redevelopment, including multiple school facilities and athletic fields, opening between 2029-2030.
    - TCU (Temporary Classroom Unit) removals at PS 19.
- 4. Capital Improvements in District 31:**
  - Total allocation for improvements: \$154 million.

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- Key projects include exterior masonry, roof replacements, electrical work, and gymnasium upgrades.
- 5. **Reso A Projects (Enhancement Projects):**
  - Funded by NYC Council, Borough President, and Mayor's Office.
  - Highlights:
    - Playground upgrades: \$21 million.
    - Auditorium enhancements: 68 projects.
    - Electrical, library, and science lab improvements.
- 6. **CEC Request Process:**
  - Deadline for top five district requests: January 17, 2025.
  - Remaining requests to be submitted by February 2025.
  - Timeline:
    - February: Revised amendment sent to the Panel for Educational Policy.
    - March/April: Panel approval.
    - June: Adoption by the NYC Council.
- 7. **Detailed Discussion on Capital Improvements**
  - **Project Selection Process:**
    - **Building Conditions Assessment Survey (BCAS):** Conducted annually to assess and prioritize building upgrades.
    - **Division of School Facilities (DSF):** Reports major issues that cannot be handled internally.
    - **Mandated Repairs:** Asbestos abatement, lead abatement, and other required updates.
    - **Community Requests:** Input from CEC and other stakeholders.
  - **Types of Projects:**
    - Exterior masonry, windows, parapets, flood elimination, roof replacement, accessibility upgrades, and more.
- 8. **District 31 Capital Improvement Highlights:**
  - **Budget Allocations:**
    - Exterior masonry: \$154 million (55 projects).
    - Roof replacements: \$108 million (33 projects).
    - Electrical work and gymnasium upgrades also prioritized.
- 9. **Reso A Project Details:**
  - Funded by:
    - Staten Island Council Members Joe Borelli, David Carr, and Kamillah Hanks.
    - Borough President Vito Fossella and the Mayor's Office.
  - Highlights include:
    - 68 auditorium upgrades.
    - 17 science labs.
    - 22 electrical enhancement projects.

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- 15 library improvements.

10. **CEC Request Form and Submission Process:**

- **Top 5 District Priorities:** Due January 17, 2025.
- **Additional Requests:** Submit by February 2025.
- Process involves collaboration with the Panel for Educational Policy and NYC Council before final adoption in June 2025.

11. **The Q&A session addressed various inquiries from council members, educators, and community members regarding the Building Condition Assessment Survey (BCAS), funding for projects, accessibility in schools, compliance with class size laws, electrification of schools, and contractor selection. Below is a summary of key points discussed.**

- Field Conditions and Surveys
  - Joseph Bird: Asked if athletic fields are included in BCAS reports and capital funding. Steve Gonzalez & Dwight Clarke: Confirmed that fields are included in surveys and funding assessments. Principals are encouraged to be present during walkthroughs to ensure thorough evaluations. Life Safety Concerns
    - Joseph Bird: Inquired about addressing life safety issues such as non-operational fire alarms from previous requests. Recommended contacting Eric from capital planning for retrospective reports.
- Accessibility Projects
  - Jimmy: Highlighted the need for ensuring playgrounds and facilities are handicap accessible.
  - Dwight Clarke & Steve Gonzalez: Confirmed that all new and upgraded playgrounds comply with ADA standards. Additional ramp and elevator installations have been completed or are in progress at several schools.
- Heating and Structural Issues
  - Pamela: Raised long-standing concerns about heating issues at PS 4 and asked for better communication channels.
  - Steve Gonzalez: Acknowledged the issue, confirmed ongoing efforts, and scheduled a visit to the school to address concerns.
- Class Size Compliance
  - Sean Ramos: Questioned if capital improvements would meet class size law requirements by 2028.
  - Steve Gonzalez: Requested the query be sent via email for follow-up with relevant departments.
- Electrification of Schools
  - Sean Ramos: Asked if new schools are generating their own electricity and about broader electrification efforts.
  - Dwight Clarke & Steve Gonzalez: Confirmed new schools aim for electrification, including solar and reduced fossil fuel usage. Older schools are undergoing retrofits for compliance.
- Contractor Selection Process
  - Yelena Tronzo: Asked how companies are chosen for projects.

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- Steve Gonzalez: Explained the stringent competitive bidding process, where the lowest qualified bidder wins after pre-qualification and experience reviews.

**12. Wrap-Up and Closing Remarks:**

- Steve Gonzalez thanked attendees for their engagement and emphasized the importance of community input in shaping the plan.
- Encouraged stakeholders to meet submission deadlines to ensure district needs are prioritized.

• **President's Report:**

**CEC Open Seats:**

Three parent representative seats and one English Language Learner parent representative seat are open on the Council. Applications are encouraged.

**School Budget Adjustments:**

Schools with lower-than-projected enrollments will not face midyear budget cuts, avoiding a \$157 million reduction. Schools with higher enrollments will receive \$146 million in additional funding. Overall, citywide enrollment decreased slightly by 0.1%.

**Special Education Day:**

Celebrated annually on December 2, recognizing the 1975 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA ensures free, quality education for students with disabilities and fosters collaboration between families and educators.

**Special Education Challenges:**

A significant shortage of paraprofessionals, teacher aides, and special education staff persists, with 1,400 vacancies in paraprofessional roles and 2,300 overall staffing gaps. This shortage impacts students with complex needs, particularly in District 75 schools.

**Suicide Prevention Initiative:**

Staten Island launched a youth suicide prevention initiative on November 25, with 170 participants addressing youth suicide risk factors and prevention strategies. Efforts will continue in collaboration with stakeholders to support students and families.

**Panel for Education Policy Updates:**

The panel postponed votes on:

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- Regulations regarding the collection and sharing of private student data (now slated for December).
- A \$17 million contract for a computer-based Specialized High Schools Admissions Test (SHSAT), delaying it to allow for additional public input.

The report concluded with a commitment to addressing these key issues in partnership with stakeholders.

**• Superintendent's Report:**

**Borough-Wide Veterans Day Celebration**

- Event held at the Petrides Campus.
- All Staten Island high schools participated to honor veterans.

**Holocaust Education Initiative**

- Hundreds of middle school students visited the Museum of Jewish Heritage in Manhattan.
- Aimed to educate students on the Holocaust and its lessons.

**New Middle School Programs with Faith-Based Partnerships**

- Launched in IS 27, IS 61, and IS 49.
- Collaboration with faith-based leaders and local businesses to provide mentoring and skill-building opportunities.

**Family Engagement Event**

- Over 60 participants attended a "Sip, Sip, and Paint" event.
- Created a mural depicting Staten Island to foster community bonding.

**Thanksgiving Volunteering at Project Hospitality**

- Elementary, middle, and high school students participated in packing, cooking, and serving food.
- Special thanks to Pastor Terry and Alan Lewin for their contributions.

**Community Resource Center at PS 18**

- A new school resource center was established, including a mini-pantry and washing facilities.
- Aimed to support the West Brighton neighborhood.

**District Academic Performance Updates**

- Beginning-of-year assessments show improvement in student performance compared to the previous year.

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- Plans to enhance performance further through tailored supports and professional development.

**Family Reports and Resources**

- Families encouraged to review their child's K-8 NWEA Family Report for insights on strengths and areas for growth.

**Reading Initiatives**

- Feedback from students and staff being incorporated to make learning engaging.
- District continues to refine teaching methods with support from coaches and data analysis.

**Community Collaboration and Goal Setting for District Leadership Team**

- A gallery walk was conducted with stakeholders to gather feedback on district goals.

**PEP Meeting Outcomes**

- Expansion of PS 26 to K-8 was approved.
- Co-location of a new District 75 school was also approved.

**Upcoming Events**

- **MWBE Expo:** December 4th, Gerard Center.
- **Wellness Council Meeting:** December 10th at Port Richmond.
- **Bullying Prevention Workshop:** January 20th.
- **Soapbox Derby:** May 17th.

**District App Launch**

- District 31 app available on Google Play and the App Store for updates and event registration.

**Football Championship**

- Curtis High School Warriors crowned PSAL Football Champions.

**Closing Remarks**

- Best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season.
- Look forward to a productive and engaging New Year.

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• **Committee Reports**

CEC31 and the District Team will host a bullying workshop on Wednesday, January 22, at 5:30 PM. The workshop will educate students and parents on the definition of bullying, steps to take if their child is a victim, and strategies to reduce bullying in schools. Food will be provided.

• **Public Speaking**

Cheryl McMillan asked if the new annex at PS 13 be used for a middle school and about a STEM lab for IS49?

President Curatolo-Boylan explained that the annex will house the early education department. This move will free up space in the main building to increase class sizes and A.I. Superintendent Dr. Palton explained that advocacy efforts are ongoing to secure funding and resources for the STEM lab. Updates are expected within the next two weeks for IS49

Arleena Duong raised concerns about insufficient food portions, particularly during later lunch periods at Staten Island Tech (Si Tech) President Curatolo-Boylan will reach Francine Forester at the Division of School Foods to ensure proper food distribution and resolve any discrepancies.

Yelena Trunzo commented about discrepancy in Curriculum and Programs between Schools like PS 54 and PS 55 have different programs, such as free after-school care and physical education resources? President Curatolo-Boylan explained Free after-school programs depend on economic data from school family income inquiry forms. Variations in programs, such as physical education, often result from school-specific initiatives, PTA involvement, or grants. Advocacy through the PTA or school leadership team is encouraged for additional resources. Parents are encouraged to engage with their school's PTA, leadership teams, and parent coordinators. Additionally, concerns can be escalated through official channels, such as contacting CEC 31 at [cec31@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:cec31@schools.nyc.gov) or through the District Team contacts found on the D31 app

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

None

• **Closing remarks**

Thank you to all our guests joining us this evening. President Curatolo-Boylan said that it's hard to believe that we've already reached the halfway point of our school year to all of our district team administrators, faculty and families. We are deeply appreciative and thankful to all of you for the efforts and work that you have put into the school year that far in each of our roles there are

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daily contributions and actions that often go unrecognized, but are nevertheless critical to the functioning of our schools and in service of our children. We all, in various forms, deal with the daily pressures and unpredictability that comes with educating or raising children. And as a result we go hard. We rush, we hustle, we improvise, we reassure, even when patience and energy levels are empty, because we care. So we'd like to take this opportunity to encourage our district community to rest and enjoy the time. Off with your loved ones over this upcoming holiday. Break this holiday season. Let us all cherish the bonds that make our community here on Staten Island so special. It's a time to embrace the warmth of friendship and family, and extend a helping hand to those in need. The holiday season serves as a reminder that we are united by a shared commitment to the well-being and success of every child in our community. May your holidays please be filled with love, laughter, and the warmth of those that are closest to you. Happy Holidays Everyone

• **Motion to Adjourn**

**Motion 1st:** Daniella Caputo

**Motion 2nd:** Amanda Wolkowitz

• **Meeting Adjourned 9:30pm**