

COMMUNITY
EDUCATION
COUNCIL
DISTRICT 31

Dr. Roderick Palton
District Superintendent

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Frank Marino
2nd Vice President

Andrew Guido
Recording Secretary

Joseph Bird
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CEC 31 Hybrid Business Meeting and Calendar
Meeting Minutes
Monday May 5th, 2025

Business Meeting

- **Call to Order** at 6:42 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**

Motion to forgo reading minutes aloud in the interest of time. Minutes were distributed to the public prior to the meeting and presented on screen during the meeting.

Motion 1st: *Melissa Cosentino*

Motion 2nd: *Amanda Wolkowitz*

Meeting minutes were approved by all members

- **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 NYSCA account. Contact your school's Parent Coordinator if you need help accessing or creating your NYSCA 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>
- **FACE Update:** Family and community empowerment is committed to ensuring community and citywide education council elections remain equitable, respectful, and in compliance with applicable regulations including Chancellor's regulation D130 and so they are writing to remind all candidates of elections rules and guidelines regarding campaigning
- **D31 Superintendent Evaluation:** is due by June 30th New York State education law requires that community education councils evaluate community superintendents on an annual basis. They have an additional resource for us that we can view on demand. The purpose of the evaluation is to allow the superintendent to receive feedback, to promote growth as an instructional leader, and to foster a stronger collaborative relationship between the superintendent and our council. I'll distribute the form again with full council, though this particular form is not required for use. It's just what we use generally to gather feedback, and

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then we'll share that form out at our June meeting so that everyone can approve submitted to the division of school leadership.

- **Office of Policy and Evaluation Meeting with CEC Presidents** to discuss an overview of computer-based testing and proposed changes to the graduation requirements. Review updates on the transition to computer-based testing for various assessments, including state Math and ELA tests and the specialized high school admissions test and proposed changes to the graduation requirements on Thursday, May 8, th at 6 Pm. Council members. If you have any specific questions regarding those 2 topics, please just feel free to email me, and I'll be sure to share them at that meeting with them
- **New York City Citywide Leadership Team CLT** o-developers have invited us to join them for the last summit of the 2024, 2025 school year on Tuesday, May 13, th at 9 30 am. They're going to be sharing the status update about the state and local Government impacts on education efforts and how we defend public education with a potential dismantling of the US Department of the education

- **Councilmember Reports**

Andrew Guido - Early Voting. Special election was held and 3,700 early votes cast, and for across all the early voting sites, and for those 10 days the students of PS. 8 were without a gym, 3,700, across all early voting sites, and then that.using it as a polling site, interfered with their plans for State testing. I, along with Glen Gontha, worked together to send out a note without input from the administration out to various stakeholders to raise this because we've raised early voting as an issue before. But this time there were real impacts to student testing requirements.

Joseph Bird - Stop Sign Placed at Cross Street in front of PS 57 . Principal Singleton identified a hazardous traffic condition, where there is a four-way crosswalk without a stop sign. The stop sign has been installed. So thank you to DOT. They finally did it. I think it took a number of years, but in front of PS 57 the cars will finally stop.

- **New Business for next month's agenda**
None

- **Motion to Adjourn**

Motion 1st: *Andrew Guido*

Motion 2nd: *Melissa Cosentino*

- **Meeting Adjourned 7:04pm**

Calendar Meeting

- **Call to Order** at 7:32PM and welcomed by President Lucia Curatolo-Boylan
- **Welcomed interpretation services** in Russian, Mandarin, and Spanish

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• **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 April & March Draft Business Meeting Minutes**

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Motion 1st: Melissa Cosentino

Motion 2nd: Andrew Guido

Meeting minutes were approved by all members

• **Presentations**

Discussion on Student Transfer Request Process Guest Speaker: Paul Helfman - Director of Enrollment

1. Overview of Office of Student Enrollment

- The Office of Student Enrollment manages admissions and enrollment for:
 - **3-K, Pre-K, Kindergarten**
 - **Grades 1–4 Gifted & Talented (G&T)**
 - **Middle and High Schools**

All applications are processed through the MySchools portal (distinct from the NYC Schools Account).

Family Welcome Centers (FWCs), located in all five boroughs, support admissions, transfers, and enrollment, especially for

- **New NYC residents**
- **Families returning from private, charter, or parochial schools**

2. Key Regulations and Resources

- Guided by Chancellor's Regulations A-101 and A-449
- Detailed information including documents and forms available at schools.nyc.gov → "Enrollment" tab

3. Age Eligibility for Early Childhood Programs

- 3-K: Must turn 3 between Jan 1 – Dec 31 of the applying year (e.g., born in 2022 for 2025–26)
- Pre-K: Turn 4 within the same calendar year
- Kindergarten: Turn 5 within the same calendar year

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- NYC uses calendar year cutoffs, not school-year cutoffs
- Children not enrolled in Kindergarten may enroll in Grade 1 the year they turn 6

4. Grade 2–12 Placement Policies

- Placement is based on school records when available
- If records are not available (e.g., international arrivals), year of birth determines grade placement

5. Zoned vs. Non-Zoned Schools

- Staten Island uniquely maintains zoning at elementary, middle, and high school levels
- Zoning is not mandatory; placement is based on seat availability and eligibility
- Families may apply to multiple schools, including non-zoned options
- FWCs help identify non-zoned schools if preferred by families

6. Common Transfer Types and Criteria

Transfer Type Details

G&T Transfers For continuity when moving between boroughs (e.g., Brooklyn to Staten Island)

Childcare Hardship Grades K–5 only; based on work commute logistics

Sibling Transfers Grades K–5; priority also given during middle school admissions

Medical Transfers Requires diagnosis and treatment plan from a physician

Reasonable Accommodations Includes parent disability that limits school access

Safety Transfers Must be documented in the Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS); careful tracking prevents reassignment with conflicting parties

Travel Hardship Commute exceeds 75 minutes or involves 3+ transit modes

Academic/Social-Emotional Guidance Transfers Academic reviewed by superintendent; social-emotional reviewed by Enrollment Office

Other Transfers Includes undocumented bullying concerns or sensitive family circumstances

7. Limitations and Clarifications

- Students from charter, private, or parochial schools are considered new admits, not transfers (no transfer data from those schools)

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- Safety tracking only applies to DOE-managed transfers. A student may register directly at their zoned school without DOE awareness of previous incidents elsewhere.

8. Contact & Additional Resources

- Email: PatritisFWC@schools.nyc.gov
- (Managed by Paul Helfman or Randy Peck, Assistant Director)
- Website: schools.nyc.gov → "Enrollment" tab for detailed info on:

Application processes, Specialized high schools, Transfers, Required forms Conclusion

Paul Helfman concluded by emphasizing the office's commitment to supporting students and families, aiming for safe and appropriate placements wherever possible. He opened the floor to council member questions.

Meeting Adjourned / Q&A Followed

• President's Report

AFTERSCHOOL FOR ALL:

- New York City Mayor Eric Adams on Tuesday announced a new plan that would bring after-school programs to all public school students in kindergarten through eighth grade citywide.
- "After-School for All" with the help of a \$331-million investment will strengthen and scale after-school programs with the goal of achieving universal access for all students and families, officials said.
- The new funding will be included in Adams' upcoming executive budget. It will also support the addition of 20,000 new seats over the next three school years, bringing the total number of public school students served by universal after-school programming to 184,000 with a total investment of \$755 million annually.
- "That's 184,000 students who will be able to participate in sports, robotics, the arts, field trips, and more — discovering their passions and building relationships with their classmates. We are also pursuing a community-driven effort that will stabilize our current after-school system, ensuring these providers are able to get a rate increase for the first time in 10 years so they can hire and train staff, while delivering quality programming to our youth," Adams said in a statement.
- "Our parents shouldn't have to choose between picking up their child or working a job to put food on the table — and now they won't have to. This is what it looks like to deliver on our mission of making New York City a safer, more affordable city that is the best place to raise a family."
- Adams' "After-School for All" plan begins with an immediate \$21 million investment allocated in the upcoming FY 2026 Executive Budget that will

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bring 5,000 additional K-5 seats online for the upcoming fall semester, officials said.

NYS STATE BUDGET

- New York Governor Kathy Hochul announced a \$254 billion state budget framework passed. The deal includes provisions to make it easier to remove individuals in psychiatric crisis from public spaces, relaxes discovery laws for prosecutors, and institutes a full-day school cellphone ban. A proposed mask restriction was weakened due to civil liberty concerns.
- Key budget highlights:
- Child Tax Credit: Up to \$1,000 for families with children under 4; scaled back from Hochul's initial \$3B refund plan to a \$2B allocation.
- Taxes: No new income taxes, but an extended surcharge on high earners and a new payroll tax increase for large companies (over \$10M revenue) to help fund the MTA's \$68B infrastructure plan.
- MTA Funding: \$9B total shared by the state, city, and MTA; \$1.2B from Penn Station renovation funds will now be used for safety and fare evasion measures.
- Education & Public Safety: Includes Hochul's priorities on mental health interventions and classroom discipline.
- Campaign Finance: Adjustments to the public matching system now allow matching for the first \$250 of donations up to \$1,000.
- Elections: Governor and lieutenant governor candidates will now run as a ticket in primaries.
- Though the agreement boosts spending by \$17B over last year, uncertainty remains due to potential federal program cuts, possibly requiring a special legislative session later in the year. Hochul's political future looms over the deal, as she faces declining approval and potential challengers in the upcoming election.

NYC School Metal Detector Program Suspended Due to Equipment Failures

- New York City's mobile school metal detector program, which conducts random safety screenings at schools, has been suspended due to a total failure of outdated scanning equipment. The NYPD School Safety Division reported that all x-ray machines used for unannounced scans are non-functional, halting the program entirely.
- In response, the Department of Education issued an emergency \$385,000 contract to purchase 15 new scanners. However, the new equipment has not yet been delivered, and officials have not disclosed how long the program has been inactive. The shortage also affects 86 schools with permanent scanners, where breakdowns have caused delays and safety concerns.
- Amid broader school safety issues, over 120 administrators signed a letter demanding more functional scanners and additional school safety agents, whose numbers have dropped by 28% in five years. So far this school year,

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4,201 weapons, including 15 firearms, have been confiscated—slightly fewer than last year.

- The use of metal detectors remains controversial. Some students and advocates argue they criminalize youth and disrupt education, while others see them as vital for safety. Critics questioned the "emergency" classification of the contract, suggesting the city should have anticipated the equipment's failure.
- The Education Department originally pulled the retroactive scanner contract from a scheduled vote by the Panel for Education Policy to address concerns, leaving questions about oversight and long-term planning unanswered. But the fortunately the PEP passed the contract renewal on April 30th

NYC to Mandate Standardized Reading and Math Curriculums in All Middle Schools by Fall 2027

- New York City will require all middle schools to adopt city-approved reading and math curriculums by fall 2027, expanding Mayor Eric Adams' and Chancellor Melissa Aviles-Ramos' push to standardize instruction across the school system. Starting this fall, 102 middle schools will be required to use a designated reading program, while 84 more will join the math mandate — building on similar mandates in elementary and high schools.
- The initiatives, called NYC Reads and NYC Solves, aim to address uneven academic outcomes and low proficiency rates (under 50% in reading, 53% in math). Officials argue that standardization allows for better teacher training, smoother student transitions between schools, and curriculum alignment with research-backed methods. However, reactions are mixed: supporters point to long-term potential, while critics — including the teachers and principals unions — cite inadequate implementation, concerns over lost teacher autonomy, and disappointing early results.
- The city's preferred middle school reading program is EL Education, with some districts using Wit & Wisdom. For math, selected programs include Amplify Desmos, i-Ready Mathematics, and Illustrative Mathematics. Notably, no district chose Into Reading, a controversial elementary program criticized for lacking cultural responsiveness and using excerpts over full texts.
- Officials acknowledge challenges, especially with math, where teacher autonomy and student engagement are key concerns. Chancellor Aviles-Ramos emphasized that mandates are not meant to stifle creativity but to provide foundational resources so teachers can focus on instruction and assessment, not curriculum design. The administration is working with unions, parent leaders, and teachers to build long-term support and hopes this systemic shift will outlast any change in leadership after the next election.

NYC's "AC for All" Program Falls Short Despite Massive Investment

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- Despite spending nearly \$500 million since 2017 on air conditioning upgrades in public schools, New York City's "AC for All" initiative has failed to fully deliver on its promise. As of last school year, about 18% of instructional spaces still lacked AC, including 22% of special education classrooms, according to the Independent Budget Office (IBO).
- The initiative was declared complete in 2022, but issues persist, including outdated or broken units and spaces never included in the program, such as converted classrooms, gyms, and libraries. Maintenance and replacement costs have been left to individual schools, straining budgets and leading to inconsistent coverage.
- Although the city bought over 19,000 units and upgraded 700 buildings' electrical systems, data shows AC access only improved by just over 2 percentage points in eight years. Discrepancies in city-reported data versus principal surveys contribute to confusion over progress.
- With over 30 hot days per school year and rising temperatures due to climate change, the lack of AC is a growing concern. A new state law effective September 2025 will ban using instructional spaces hotter than 88°F, raising logistical challenges for schools without sufficient cooling.
- The program's cost also ballooned: capital costs alone reached \$460 million, far exceeding initial estimates. Meanwhile, students report that overheated classrooms continue to disrupt learning and teaching.
- Summer Rising Offers

NEW THIS YEAR: The last day to accept Summer Rising offers is Thursday, May 8—make sure you accept your offer and answer any required questions to ensure your child's seat! This year, families will not be automatically enrolled, and must accept their children's offers by the deadline, as Summer Rising placements will not be confirmed until families accept them. Accepting an offer will not affect your child's chances of getting a waitlist offer to another program at a later date.

- Waitlist Information
- Video instructions on how to add your child to waitlists can be found here: schools.nyc.gov/Waitlists (Open external link)

2nd Annual SI Youth Mental & Behavioral Health Symposium:

- An event for parents, agency partners, school personnel, community members, and youth is being held on
- Tuesday, May 20th
- 9am-4pm
- Staten Island Hilton Garden Inn
- Register at <https://tinyurl.com/YMHSymp2025>

FREE SUMMER CAMP & ACTIVITIES:

- <https://www.nycgovparks.org/highlights/free-summer-activities-for-kids>
- <https://unitedactivities.org/no-cost-to-families-summer-camp/>
- SUPERINTENDENT REPORT:

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- And now Presenting our newly appointed and confirmed D31 Superintendent Dr. Roderick Palton for some Districtwide Updates
- **Thank you Dr. Palton and District Team**

• **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."*
- **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.

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- **Committee Reports - None**
- **Public Speaking -**
Addressed Public Speaking Earlier During Superintendent's Report
- **New Business**
Bullying Presentation to Discuss with District
- **Old Business**
Readdress 9/11 Resolution & Implementation in District for next year
- **Motion to Adjourn**
Motion 1st: *Frank Marino*
Motion 2nd: *Jordan Dale*
- **Meeting Adjourned 9:37 pm**