



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

COMMUNITY
EDUCATION
COUNCIL
DISTRICT 31

Dr. Roderick Palton
District Superintendent

OFFICERS

Lucia Curatolo-Boylan
Acting Interim
President

Kristie Montalvan
D75 Representative

Jessica Reyes
ELL Representative

James Desiderato
IEP Representative

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Joseph Bird
Melissa Cosentino
Andrew Guido
Amanda Kelly
Frank Marino
Erin Ulitto

Daniella Caputo
Teresa Cirelli
Borough President
Appointees

VACANT
Parliamentarian
Student Members
Administrative Assistant

Business Meeting

• **Call to Order** at 6:36 PM and welcomed by Acting Interim President Lucia Curatolo-Boylan

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

• **Roll call of Members**

***In-Person:** Joseph Bird, Daniella Caputo, Frank Marino, Teresa Cirelli, Lucia Curatolo-Boylan, Andrew Guido, Amanda Kelly, Erin Ulitto, Jimmy Desiderato, Kristie Montalvan & Melissa Cosentino*

***Virtual:** Jessica Reyes*

• **Vote on Member Absences**

Unfortunately, since our Council does not hold our annual meeting, where we elect officers until September. I would ask for a motion from Council to postpone voting on member absences until September

Motion 1st: Erin Ulitto

Motion 2nd: Daniella Caputo

• **Approval July 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: Daniella Caputo

Motion 2nd: Amanda Kelly

Meeting minutes were approved by all members

• **President's Report**

• **Oath of Office**

- This is a friendly reminder that all elected council members must submit an original, notarized Oath of Office to the Office of Family and Community Empowerment (FACE) by July 1, 2025, which is the official start of your 2-year term. Please note: You will NOT be permitted to vote or participate in official council decisions until your notarized oath has been submitted to FACE, officially recorded, and shared with your Administrative Assistant for documentation. If you've already completed and submitted your oath—thank you! No further action is needed at this time. If not, please refer to the attached Oath of Office form and instructions. You may



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either: Bring the notarized original to your first council meeting and give it to your FACE Governance Specialist, or Mail it to our office using the instructions provided. If you have any questions or need support, please don't hesitate to reach out.

● **Administrative Assistant Preliminary Interviews:**

- Preliminary Interviews have begun for our vacant Administrative Assistant position. We have eight candidates. We will narrow down to three candidates and have final interviews next week. For any Council members interested in being part of the final interview please let me know via email as soon as possible.

● **NYC Reads Ambassador Event Planning Trainings Ambassador Workshop:**

- Is offering an upcoming training to go over how to use the skills you learned during the ambassador program and host your own events and sessions! They are offering two sessions both on Thursday August 7th. Register with either of the zoom links.
 - Date: August 7th
 - Time: 9-10am
 - Zoom: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/HkodwWR6Qxe3eontsrshvYA>
 - Time: 5:30pm-6:30pm
 - Zoom: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/_eVm-WnpT1G6ntISopdJwA

● **CEC ID**

- To receive a CEC ID card - which helps expedite entrance to school buildings though is not necessary. Members can visit the HR Connect Portal at <https://doehrconnect.custhelp.com> Log in using the non-employee link. (Note: If it is your first time logging in as a non-employee, you may need to create an account using this non-employee link). Review the information regarding Obtaining a Photo ID. Complete the PhotoID Request Form and save the file. When you are ready to submit your request, click on the Upload Documents link located in the header of any page. In the Category field, scroll down and select "Walk-in Center" then, "ID request." Fill out the remaining fields, attach your completed PhotoID Request form and click Submit. You may return to the HR Connect Portal at any time to check the status of your request. Simply click on the My Account link in the upper right corner and select Account Overview. Member email requests should include the following information:
 - Full Name
 - Home Address
 - CEC Approval Letter (that is attached here from FACE upon request)
 - Fill out the remaining fields, attach your completed PhotoID Request form, ID letter and click Submit
 - On the day of the appointment CEC member must bring the following:
 - Valid government issued ID
 - CEC Approval Letter (that is attached here from FACE upon request)
 - Appointment confirmation



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- Please see the approval letter for the Photo ID Unit from FACE attached via email sent to you today.

• Committee Requests:

If members have not already emailed the list of committees you are interested in please do so as soon as possible so that I can share the updated committee and liaison contact list prior to our September meeting.

• Councilmember Reports

Request to move funds in the budget to improve sound quality on our meetings and a request to separate the safety and transportation committee. As well as request for all CEC liaisons to attend a BRT meeting at each of their schools and report back to the safety committee, as well as combine some previous ones. A request as well to add in addition to the Special Education Committee a separate Co-location Committee. Council agreed that while the issues are extremely important the current committees could when meeting regularly and under current purview address the issues discussed. So separating into separate committees at this time is not necessary. Budget is addressed in September and the Council agreed to move funds to address sound quality. In the interim all members will bring headsets for September meeting and see if this corrects issues.

• Old Business

None

• New Business

None

• Motion to Adjourn

Motion 1st: *Frank Marino*

Motion 2nd: *Andrew Guido*

• Meeting Adjourned 7:01pm

Calendar Meeting

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

• Welcomed interpretation services in Russian, Mandarin, and Spanish



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• **Roll call of Members**

In-Person: Joseph Bird, Daniella Caputo, Frank Marino, Teresa Cirelli, Lucia Curatolo-Boylan, Andrew Guido, Amanda Kelly, Erin Ulitto, Jimmy Desiderato, Kristie Montalvan & Melissa Cosentino

Virtual: Jessica Reyes

• **Vote on Member Absences**

Unfortunately, since our Council does not hold our annual meeting, where we elect officers until September, I would ask for a motion from Council to postpone voting on member absences until September

Motion 1st: Andrew Guido

Motion 2nd: Daniella Caputo

• **Approval July Draft Calendar Meeting Minutes**

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Motion 1st: Daniela Caputo

Motion 2nd: Erin Ulitto

Meeting minutes were approved by all members

• **Presentations**

None

• **President's Report**

• **PEP PARENT MEMBER VACANCY:**

- The Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) is a 24-member, voting body overseeing New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) and is composed of community leaders across every neighborhood and borough of New York City. As codified in the Bylaws, the Panel believes that education is a fundamental human right, and that it is our duty to ensure that all students have equal access to the opportunity and resources needed to reach full potential. Its primary purpose is to approve and oversee educational policies, including school co-locations and closings, contracts over \$1 million, Gifted and Talented programs, and the citywide school budget. The PEP aims to ensure equitable access to high-quality education for all students in NYC. The Panel for Education Policy is currently seeking to fill a vacancy for the Staten Island representative, who is elected by the CEC President. If you are interested in serving in this role, please complete the application linked below and submit it to PEPParentApplications@schools.nyc.gov by July 13, 2025.



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● **FREE MAMMOGRAPHY SCREENING::**

- free mammography screening event with American-Italian Cancer Foundation to provide free mammography screenings and clinical breast exams to women across Staten Island. Although significant progress has been made in the early detection and treatment of breast cancer - allowing many to lead long, healthy lives - the battle against this deadly disease is far from over. Sadly, breast cancer remains the second leading cause of death among women in New York State and until the cure is found, the best tool in the fight against breast cancer is education and early detection. Regular mammograms can detect breast cancer sometimes up to 3 years before it can be manually detected, facilitating earlier diagnosis and treatment, which increases the chance of survival.
- The Mammogram Bus will be located at my District Office. To schedule a no-cost mammogram please call: 877-628-9090
 - When: Thursday, September 18, 2025, 9:30am-4:30pm
 - Where: Senator Lanza's District Office 3845 Richmond Avenue, Suite 2A Staten Island, NY 10312

● **3rd ANNUAL UFT BACKPACK EVENT:**

- Backpacks, school supplies, resources, food, activities, fun!
- Students must be present to claim a backpack, while supplies last.
- For more information, please contact Marie Rodriguez
- at mrodriguez@uft.org
 - WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2024
 - NOON - 2 P.M
 - PS 21 168 Hooker Place, Staten Island, NY 10302

● **DELAY IN HIGH SCHOOL ADMISSIONS DATA:**

- For the first time in over a decade, New York City's Education Department has not released its high school admissions statistics by mid-June, drawing concern from advocates and former officials. These statistics, which include demographic data on admissions to the city's prestigious but highly segregated specialized high schools, are typically scrutinized for the low enrollment of Black and Latino students.
- The delay has raised questions about transparency, with critics suggesting it could be politically motivated, especially as Mayor Eric Adams seeks reelection. Some speculate the data is being withheld until summer to avoid public scrutiny. Former department staff and transparency advocates argue the public has a right to timely access.
- An Education Department spokesperson said the delay is due to the inclusion of new statistics that require accuracy checks, though details are scarce. Advocates say the delay reflects a broader lack of commitment by the administration to address segregation and provide clear data. Some also note broader challenges the department faces, such as federal funding cuts and immigration pressures.
- The data is now expected to be released on a forthcoming Thursday.



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● **AFTERCARE PROGRAMMING ADDED:**

- Mayor Eric Adams announced that 40 schools across New York City will receive 5,000 new free after-school seats for K-5 students starting this fall. The programs, running until 6 p.m., will offer activities such as sports, art, and robotics. The expansion targets high-need neighborhoods and aims to support both students and working parents.
- By 2027, the city plans to add another 15,000 seats, with a goal of eventually making after-school programs universal. The projected cost is \$331 million annually by that year.
- The expansion comes amid a federal education funding freeze by the Trump administration, which threatens up to \$130–\$170 million in NYC school funding. Despite this uncertainty, Adams assured that the after-school initiative will proceed.
- Schools receiving new seats were selected based on factors like poverty, crime, lack of after-school options, and high numbers of students with disabilities or learning English. Three charter schools are included in the rollout.
 - P.S. 74 Future Leaders Elementary School Address: 211 Daniel Low Terrace, Staten Island, New York 10301 Neighborhood: St. George-New Brighton
 - P.S. 054 Charles W. Leng Address: 1060 Willowbrook Road, Staten Island, New York 10314 Neighborhood: Todt Hill-Emerson Hill-Lighthouse Hill-Manor Heights

● **CELL PHONE BAN & FUNDING:**

- With just six weeks before New York State's new "bell-to-bell" cellphone ban takes effect in all public schools, New York City officials announced \$29 million in funding — \$25 million from the city and \$4 million from the state — to help implement the policy. However, the funds have not yet been distributed, creating uncertainty for schools still planning how to enforce the ban.
- More than half of NYC schools already restrict phone use, using methods like lockable Yondr pouches or phone collection bins. The city expects all schools to be ready on day one of the new school year, with no gradual rollout. Each school must create a policy for storing all internet-enabled devices, including smartwatches and tablets, and offer students limited access when needed (e.g., for medical or educational reasons).
- Exceptions are allowed, and schools must also provide emergency contact options for families. While violations of the ban won't result in suspension, schools must define their discipline procedures. Policies must be developed with input from school leadership teams, though these teams often don't meet over the summer, adding to the logistical challenge.
- Governor Hochul and Chancellor Aviles-Ramos emphasized that the policy aims to reduce distractions, improve learning, and support student mental health, acknowledging the transition may be tough for both students and parents.



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- The Panel for Educational Policy, the voting body overseeing the city's public schools, last Wednesday approved proposed amendments to Chancellor's Regulations A-413 that align with Gov. Hochul's mandated smartphone ban in schools.

• Superintendent's Report

• Cell Phone Ban

○ **Policy Overview**

- A citywide "bell-to-bell" ban on student use of cell phones and electronic devices has been implemented.
- Devices must be put away throughout the school day unless explicitly authorized (e.g., medical exceptions).
- Schools can decide how to enforce the policy (e.g., locked magnetic pouches, self-managed Velcro pouches).
- Each school is required to submit its own policy aligned with the overarching DOE framework.

○ **Implementation Details**

- Dr. Roderick Palton emphasized the importance of school-based flexibility in execution.
- Schools may use:
 - Self-managed pouches stored in student bags.
 - Centralized locking systems where pouches are collected and stored.
- Schools have begun implementation with some already seeing positive student responses.

○ **Student Engagement**

- Policy aims to increase student interaction and reduce screen time.
- Students will still have access to 1:1 educational devices for classroom learning

○ **Parental Communication**

- Emergency communication systems will be available through school phones, similar to pre-cell phone procedures.
- Parental partnership is critical to the success of the policy.

○ **Concerns Raised**

- Lack of Centralized Guidance
 - Principals are responsible for crafting and enforcing the policy without a detailed DOE-provided framework.
 - This creates inconsistency and puts additional pressure on school leadership.
- **Disciplinary Ambiguity**
 - Current disciplinary code has not been updated since 2004 and lacks specific references to electronic devices.
 - Concerns about lack of clear consequences, enforcement strategies, and progressive discipline structures..
 - Suspension as a consequence is mentioned in the DOE regulation, but lacks defined guidance.
- **Equity & Feasibility**



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- Schools vary greatly in size, capacity, and resources, which affects how they can implement the policy.
- Funding for pouches and enforcement tools is not yet allocated to all schools.
- **Recommendations from CEC Members**
 - Provide schools with a baseline policy template or framework.
 - Include defined progressive discipline steps for infractions.
 - Ensure uniform enforcement expectations while allowing schools flexibility for implementation..
- **Next Steps**
 - DOE to continue reviewing submitted school policies to ensure alignment.
 - Follow-up needed on funding availability for equipment (pouches, locking systems).
 - Further guidance or training may be necessary to assist principals with rollout and discipline consistency.
- **NYC School Survey Results**
 - NYC School Survey results are now live at nycschoolssurvey.org
 - District 31 received 21,018 responses this year.
 - Preliminary analysis shows District 31 performed above the city average in most areas.
 - More detailed comparisons to last year's results are still being reviewed.
- **After-School Programs**
 - Two new after-school programs will launch this year at schools that have been long advocated for (school names pending final confirmation)
 - Next school year, the district will receive three additional after-school programs.
 - Advocacy was key: district requested and received more than initially offered.
- **New District Vision & Mission**
 - A draft of the new vision and mission was submitted to CC for review.
 - Principals provided feedback during a July meeting.
 - The final version will focus on equity, empathy, and excellence.
 - Once finalized and approved by DLT, it will be shared with the public.
- **Early Childhood Education (3K/4K)**
 - A **new 3K class** will open at **P.S. 69** (South Shore area).
 - Plans are in place to open a **4K class next year** at another school.
 - Expansion is ongoing, but **limited by the class size law**, which restricts available space in schools.

● **Committee Reports**

- **Lockdown Incident Overview at Petrides**
 - **A recent shelter-in lockdown occurred at P.S. 3 (Patriotis) due to an external threat. NYPD was involved.**
 - New self-locking doors, recently activated, caused confusion during the lockdown as students were locked outside the building.



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- The secured perimeter (quad) did not include protocols for students caught outside during such incidents.
- **Safety Concerns Identified**
 - No procedures in place for students locked out during shelter-in situations.
 - Lack of clarity on where students should go in such emergencies
 - Frosted doors prevent visibility, making it harder for staff to identify students outside.
 - Inconsistent communication and confusion during the event highlighted training and procedural gap
- **Proposed Action Items** Additional training needed for:
 - Review and update shelter-in protocols to account for self-locking doors.
 - Additional Training needed for
 - Staff
 - Students
 - Building Response Teams
 - Designated safety zones must be clearly communicated to students in case they are outside during a lockdown.
 - Emphasize camera coverage and visibility at all entrances/exits; not all schools have cameras facing doors.
 - Principals should revisit safety procedures during September training, especially new principals.
- **Broader Context and Related Incidents**
 - A similar issue occurred during the Tottenville shooting at dismissal, where students were outside and unable to re-enter the building.
 - Dr. Palton noted that, in other districts (e.g., Brooklyn), students can seek shelter in nearby stores—not an option in all areas (e.g., South Shore), which necessitates location-specific planning.
- **Next Steps**
 - John Grassadonio will be invited to speak with principals about shelter-in best practices.
 - Plans to engage families and PTAs through safety presentations or mock drills so that parents understand protocols.
 - Emphasis on reinforcing protocols during the first days of school for all students and staff.
 - Dr. Palton noted that, in other districts (e.g., Brooklyn), students can seek shelter in nearby stores—not an option in all areas (e.g., South Shore), which necessitates location-specific planning.

• **Public Speaking**

None

• **New Business**

- **Budget Adjustment Request**
 - A request was made to allocate funds from the current budget to **improve sound quality** during meetings.



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- The **Council agreed** that sound issues need to be addressed.
- **Action:** Budget will be reviewed in **September**, and funds will be moved accordingly.
- **Interim Measure:** All members will bring personal **headsets** to the September meeting to test for improvements.
- **Committee Structure Proposals**
 - Requests Made:
 - **Separate the Safety and Transportation Committee** into two individual committees.
 - Create a **new Co-location Committee** separate from the Special Education Committee..
 - Require all **CEC liaisons** to attend a **BRT (Building Response Team)** meeting at their respective schools and report back to the Safety Committee.
 - **Council Response:**
 - While the Council **acknowledges the importance** of these issues, it was agreed that the **existing committees** can address these concerns effectively when they meet regularly and function within their current scope..
 - Therefore, **no new committees will be formed at this time.**
- **Overcrowding and Class Size Reduction**
 - **Concern Raised:** Despite population growth due to new housing developments, there is a lack of new school buildings beyond a few planned projects (e.g., K-8 school).
 - Challenges Identified:
 - Overdevelopment with little to no corresponding increase in educational infrastructure.
 - Long lead times (5–9 years) to build new schools.
 - Influx of families not being adequately accounted for in school planning.
 - Space Utilization:
 - Schools are meeting classroom requirements by creatively repurposing spaces (e.g., cutting into gymnasiums, arts rooms).
 - Space shortages have led to mobile ("on a cart") art, music, and science instruction.
 - Impact on Enrichment Programs
 - **Arts, Gym, and Specialized Programs:**
 - Reduced space has led to cuts in programs like dance, robotics, and visual arts.
 - These programs are deemed essential for a well-rounded education.
 - Concern that space needed for class size reduction is compromising these vital activities.
 - Special Education and Therapy Services
 - **Issue:**
 - Therapy rooms are being converted into classrooms.



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- Some special education students are receiving services in inappropriate settings (e.g., hallways).

Result: Disruption in services and lack of adequate accommodations for students who require quiet or focused environments.

- Physical Education Access
 - **Concern:** Many elementary schools lack access to gyms or proper physical education facilities.
 - **Suggested Action:**
 - Request a **district-wide audit** of schools' access to gym spaces and enrichment programs.
 - Understand how many schools meet the minimum standard for physical education and arts
- Need for Vocational and Technical Education
 - **Advocacy for:**
 - Expansion of CTE (Career and Technical Education) opportunities.
 - Establishment of a D79 Co-Op Tech school on Staten Island for hands-on, trade-based education.
- Stakeholder Involvement
 - **Recommendation:**
 - School Leadership Teams (SLTs) and parent bodies should be engaged in all decisions affecting school space and programming.
 - Transparency and communication between principals and communities are crucial
- **Next Steps**
 - **Budget Review:** September meeting to include reallocation of funds for sound quality improvements.
 - **Headsets:** All members to bring headsets to the September meeting.
 - **Liaison Reports:** CEC liaisons encouraged to attend BRT meetings and share relevant updates with the Safety Committee.
 - **Request data** on gym and enrichment space availability across the district. **Advocate** for smarter land use planning tied to new residential development.
 - **Continue dialogue** with DOE on school capacity planning tied to population projections.

● **Old Business**

A reminder about CEC31 9/11 resolution and its' implementation throughout the District with the upcoming day of remembrance

● **Closing Remarks**



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I thank you to all of our district principals for coming and joining us this evening. I want to thank Stacy Magnus, our Family Leadership Support Coordinator from the District for joining us and our FACE Representative from Central, Diana Perez-Miller, for joining us as well. We're so glad that you could join us tonight. We look forward to seeing you in September. Keep an eye out for our flyer and our upcoming link.

• **Motion to Adjourn**

Motion 1st: *Joseph Bird*

Motion 2nd: *Melissa Cosentino*

• **Meeting Adjourned 8:23 pm**