



COMMUNITY
EDUCATION
COUNCIL
DISTRICT 31

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ELL Representative

Daniella Caputo
Teresa Circelli
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Amanda Kelly
Erin Ulitto

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MEMBERS**

Daphne Appiah
Peri Sgambelluri

**ADMINISTRATIVE
ASSISTANT**

Lauren Richichi

**CEC 31 Hybrid Business Meeting and Calendar
Meeting Minutes
Monday January 5th, 2026**

Business Meeting

- **Call to Order** at 6:37pm and welcomed by 1st Vice President Jimmy Desiderato.
- **Welcome Remarks:**
 - 1st Vice President Jimmy Desiderato
- **Interpretation services in Russian, Mandarin, and Spanish provided**
- **Roll call of Members**
 - In-Person:** Joseph Bird, Daniella Caputo, Teresa Cirelli, Jimmy Desiderato, Andrew Guido, Amanda Kelly, Jessica Reyes, Erin Ulitto, Melissa Cosentino, Daphne Appiah & Peri Scambelluri*
 - Virtual:** Kristie Montalvan*
 - Absent:** Lucia Curatolo-Boylan & Frank Marino*
- **Approval of December 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:** Andrew Guido
 - Motion 2nd:** Daniella Caputo
 - Meeting minutes were approved by all members
- **Review Member Absences**
 - Following members were absent in December
 - Melissa Cosentino
 - Jessica Reyes
 - Teresa Circelli
 - Jimmy Desiderato
 - Andrew Guido
- **Motion to Approve Absences as Excused or Unexcused**
 - Motion 1st:** Andrew Guido
 - Motion 2nd:** Daniella Caputo



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Councilmembers unanimously approve the absences as excused and moved to vote at the Calendar Meeting

School Renaming: PS 78:

The Council discussed the renaming of PS 78 in accordance with Chancellor’s Regulation A-860.

Proposal:

Principal Contento formally requested approval to rename PS 78 as Stapleton Lighthouse Community School.

Principal Contento addressed the Council, explaining:

- The school has operated without an official name since a phase-in/phase-out process in 2012.
- Students and community members participated in a naming process and voted for the proposed name.
- The name reflects the school’s identity, culture, and community values and is already embedded in the school environment.

Council Discussion:

No questions or objections were raised by Council members.

Action:

A motion was made and seconded to place the renaming of PS 78 to *Stapleton Lighthouse Community School* on the agenda for a vote at the Calendar Meeting.

• President’s Report

REIMBURSEMENTS:

A reminder for all Councilmembers to complete their monthly reimbursement forms and child care expense logs.



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NYCPS Family Connectors Program

The program supports families by connecting them to NYC Public Schools resources and services.

Sign Up to Join the Program: <https://forms.office.com/r/KybsF0jqde>

You can view previous sessions on Parent University: <https://parentu.schools.nyc/>

Parent University Resources

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- ✓ Be a trusted resource for families in your community
- ✓ Learn about important programs and services from NYC Public Schools, the City, and the State
- ✓ Help families find tools and opportunities they need to thrive

If you have any questions reach out to FamilyConnectors@schools.nyc.gov.

THE MAYOR IS LISTENING:

Mayor Zohran is organizing "[The Mayor is Listening](#)," an "opportunity for New Yorkers to share their stories, needs and visions for the city directly with Zohran."

It's an opportunity to share with Zohran our vision for public education.

- Your name
- Why education justice is important to you
- What your top issues are
- Whatever else you'd like to recommend

https://actionnetwork.org/surveys/the-mayor-is-listening?link_id=3&can_id=5b2d0a9f37e91a08eccf05f58a403ad1&source=email-tonight-a-roadmap-to-the-nyc-schools-chancellor&email_referrer=email_3023153&email_subject=share-your-thoughts-with-zohran&&



IBO WORKSHOP OFFERING

Come join us for a workshop led by the NYC Independent Budget Office, with experts who will demystify the school budget. Tues Jan 20th at 6:00pm

Register Here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/0bZ9clwQqedbKpprkrO1w?link_id=7&can_id=5b2d0a9f37e91a08eccf05f58a403ad1&source=email-tonight-a-roadmap-to-the-nyc-schools-chancellor&email_referrer=email_3023153&email_subject=share-your-thoughts-with-zohra
[n&#/registration](#)

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• Councilmember Reports

- A Councilmember shared positive feedback from a visit to PS 5, praising the school leadership, staff, and facility improvements.
- A safety update noted the appointment of a new NYC Schools Chancellor. The Council agreed to re-engage with the Chancellor's office and send correspondence to request a meeting, rather than waiting for the next town hall

• Old Business

None

• New Business

None

• Motion to Adjourn

Motion 1st: Teresa Circelli

Motion 2nd: Daniella Caputo

• Meeting Adjourned: 6:49pm

Calendar Meeting

- **Call to Order** at 7:33 PM and welcomed by 1st Vice President Jimmy Desiderato
- **Welcome Remarks:** 1st Vice President Jimmy Desiderato
- **Interpretation services in Russian, Mandarin, and Spanish provided**



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• Roll call of Members

***In-Person:** Joseph Bird, Daniella Caputo, Teresa Cirelli, Jimmy Desiderato, Andrew Guido, Amanda Kelly, Jessica Reyes, Erin Ulitto, Melissa Cosentino, Daphne Appiah & Peri Scambelluri*

***Virtual:** Kristie Montalvan*

***Absent:** Lucia Curatolo-Boylan, Frank Marino*

• Approval December 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: Andrew Guido

Motion 2nd: Daniella Caputo

Meeting minutes were approved by all members

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Councilmembers unanimously approve the absences as excused and moved to vote at the Calendar Meeting

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Proposal:

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Principal Contento addressed the Superintendent, Council & Public, explaining:

- The school has operated without an official name since a phase-in/phase-out process in 2012.
- Students and community members participated in a naming process and voted for the proposed name.
- The name reflects the school's identity, culture, and community values and is already embedded in the school environment.

Council Discussion:

No questions or objections were raised by Council members

Public Discussion:

No questions or objections were raised by community members

Action:

At the business meeting motion to put the renaming to vote at the Calendar meeting was approved. Roll Call Councilmember Vote was taken: 12 in favor and 0 opposed

• President's Report

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- Your name
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New Schools Chancellor

- Mayor Zohran Mamdani announced Kumar Samuels as the new NYC Schools Chancellor.
- Mayoral control of schools will continue, with a commitment to increased parent, teacher, and student involvement.
- Chancellor Samuels is known for literacy initiatives (including NYC Reads), integration efforts, and restorative justice advocacy.

Legislation on Student Suspensions

- City lawmakers are considering a bill requiring disclosure of long-term suspension data for students with disabilities.
- The bill aims to improve transparency, accountability, and compliance with federal protections.

Kindergarten Admissions

- Applications are open for children born in 2021 who will attend kindergarten in Fall 2026.
- Application deadline: January 23, 2026.



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- All NYC residents are guaranteed a kindergarten seat.
- Applications may be submitted online, by phone, or at Family Welcome Centers.

Presentation: School Construction Authority (SCA)

Steve Gonzalez presented the November 2025 Amendment to the FY 2025–2029 Five-Year Capital Plan for the School Construction Authority (SCA).

Capital Plan Summary

- Total Capital Plan: \$20.9 billion

Major Funding Categories:

- Capacity: \$6.98 billion
 - New school construction, additions, and annexes
- Healthy Schools: \$2.3 billion
 - Electrification, heating upgrades, playgrounds, athletic fields, pools, learning gardens
- Capital Improvements (CIP): \$7.92 billion
 - Building envelope repairs, interior and exterior upgrades, life safety and security
- Mandated Programs: \$3.72 billion
 - Local Law compliance, asbestos abatement, emergency projects, building code compliance

Citywide Highlights

- New Capacity: \$6.13 billion
- Electrification: \$1.40 billion (eliminating fossil fuels)
- Technology Upgrades: \$1.25 billion (classroom infrastructure, devices)
- Accessibility: \$800 million (ADA compliance, elevators, ramps, lifts)
- Physical Education Upgrades: Playground and gym upgrades
- Cafeteria Enhancements: \$150 million

District 31 Capacity Highlights

- P.S. 19 Addition



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- 330 seats
- Anticipated occupancy: September 2027
- P.S. 13 Annex (Virginia Ave & Bay St.)
 - 283 seats
 - Anticipated occupancy: September 2027
- St. John Villa Campus (Largest SCA Project to Date)
 - P.S./I.S. at 27 Landis Ave
 - 764 seats
 - Anticipated occupancy: September 2030
 - High School at 34 Cleveland Place
 - 1,350 seats
 - Anticipated occupancy: September 2029
 - Includes athletic field
 - Includes 192 District 75 seats

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Funding is determined by:

- Building Condition Assessment Survey (BCAS)
 - Annual inspections; ratings from 1 (best) to 5 (worst)
 - Ratings of 4–5 more likely to receive funding
- DSF “Red Dot” Emergency Referrals
- Mandated Repairs
- Reso A Projects
- CEC Priority Requests

District 31 CIP Highlights:

- Roof replacements (4 projects): ~\$13.3 million
- Heating plant/boiler upgrades (4 projects): ~\$11.3 million
- Exterior masonry projects (5 projects): ~\$10 million

Reso A (City Council–Funded) Projects

- Funded by NYC Council Members and Borough President
- Acknowledgment of Council Members Hanks, Carr, Frank Morano, former Council Member Joe Borelli, and Borough President Vito Fossella

District 31 Reso A Highlights:



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- 37 playground projects: \$26.3 million
- 74 auditorium projects: \$19 million
- 16 library projects: \$6.1 million
- 16 science lab projects: \$5 million
- 22 electrical projects: \$4 million

MWLBE Program

- SCA commitment to Minority-, Women-, and Locally-Owned Business Enterprises
- FY 2025 District 31:
 - \$26+ million awarded
 - 11 MWLBE firms
 - 11 projects
 - Represents 45% of CIP contracts in District 31

CEC Priority Project Request Process

- Annual submission each November
- Top 5 district priorities required
- Forms due mid-January
- CEC responsibilities include:
 - Reviewing capital eligibility
 - Consulting principals and custodial engineers
 - Reviewing existing funded projects
- SCA handles major capital work only
- Maintenance issues should be directed to custodians or DSF

Discussion & Questions

- **CEC members raised concerns about:**
 - Lack of feedback on repeated high-priority CEC requests
 - Life-safety projects recurring year after year without resolution
 - Limited transparency after submission to SCA
- **SCA explained:**
 - Requests are reviewed by SCA Capital Plan Division
 - BCAS ratings significantly influence funding decisions
 - Projects rated below "4" are unlikely to be funded
- **DSF offered:**
 - Greater collaboration with CEC during prioritization



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- Joint review to determine whether items are capital-eligible or maintenance-related
- Willingness to address maintenance items directly through DSF

Action Items

- CEC members to email SCA specific repeated project requests for follow-up.
- SCA to raise feedback loop concerns with Capital Plan Division.
- CEC Construction Committee to schedule a follow-up meeting with:
 - SCA Capital Plan Division
 - DSF representatives
- DSF to participate earlier in CEC prioritization discussions to clarify eligibility.
- Future meetings to allow more focused time for SCA presentations.

• Superintendent's Report

Opening Remarks

- The meeting opened with New Year greetings and well wishes to all attendees.
- Best wishes were extended to President Curatolo-Boylan for a speedy recovery, with recognition of interim leadership efforts.
- Acknowledgement of widespread flu illness in the community.

New Year Message

- A district-wide New Year's resolution was shared emphasizing kindness, respect, and positive interactions.
- Reference was made to the book *Be Kind* as a model for values-based learning, highlighting the importance of learning from students.
- Emphasis placed on fostering a more supportive and compassionate school community.

Student & School Recognition

- Recognition of Principal Contento's elementary school peer mediation program:
 - Students presented at the District Attorney's breakfast.
 - Program praised for promoting conflict resolution skills at the elementary level.



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- Appreciation extended to all elementary school principals participating in peer mediation and restorative justice initiatives across the borough.
- Recognition of PS 22 students:
 - Students performed a musical presentation at City Hall.
 - Students were noted as the first group of children to meet the newly appointed mayor, Aran Mandami.
 - Acknowledgement of administrative leadership for coordinating the visit on short notice.
 - Praise given to the students for their performance and representation of the borough.

District & Citywide Initiatives

- Update provided following a meeting with Chancellor Samuels:
 - Continued focus on NYC Solves and NYC Reads initiatives.
 - Positive early data noted for NYC Reads, with commitment to continued improvement.
 - Discussion of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS):
 - Identified as a district priority.
 - Emphasized as a support framework for all students, not only select groups.
 - MTSS described as key to advancing district-wide outcomes.

Chancellor Visit Announcement

- Chancellor Samuels scheduled to visit Staten Island on Jan 7th at 10:00 AM.
- Location: Jerome Parker Campus (CSI High School).
- All CEC members invited.
- Visit to include:
 - Campus walkthrough
 - Discussion of the Chancellor's vision and priorities
 - Opportunity for the Chancellor to learn more about Staten Island's unique needs and strengths

Arts Education Updates

- Reaffirmation of commitment to arts education:
 - Confirmation that no art rooms are being eliminated.
- Announcement of upcoming arts opportunities:
 - Free tickets available for on-island and off-island arts programs, including off-Broadway shows and Disney on Ice.



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- Transportation will be provided.
- Opportunities open to students and families.
- Special inclusion of 3-K and Pre-K students to ensure equitable access.
- Principals were informed via email and are expected to communicate opportunities to families.

Introduction to Academic Screeners

- The district reiterated its commitment to supporting families' understanding of academic screeners.
- Introduction of Isabelle Simmons, ELA Implementation Specialist for District 31.
- Isabelle was recognized as a key district expert on academic screening tools, particularly Acadience Reading.
- It was noted that Jennifer Matting would follow with a presentation on MAP assessment.

Presentation: Acadience Reading

Presenter: Isabelle Simmons, ELA Implementation Specialist, D31

Overview & Purpose

- Acadience Reading is the universal literacy screener used for students in grades K–2.
- All students K–10 are screened three times per year using universal screeners.
- Acadience is not a graded assessment, but a diagnostic tool used to:
 - Monitor reading development
 - Identify students at risk for reading difficulties
 - Inform instructional planning and intervention

Skills Assessed

Acadience assesses early literacy skills directly linked to reading success, including:

- Phonemic Awareness
- Alphabetic Principle / Phonics
- Word Reading Skills
- Oral Reading Fluency

Specific measures include:

- First Sound Fluency
- Letter Naming Fluency (indicator of risk)



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- Phoneme Segmentation Fluency
- Nonsense Word Fluency
- Oral Reading Fluency

These measures assess the progression from sound awareness to fluent reading and comprehension.

Grade-Level Assessment Windows

- Kindergarten
 - Beginning of year: First Sound Fluency, Letter Naming Fluency
 - Midyear (January): Letter Naming Fluency, Phoneme Segmentation Fluency, Nonsense Word Fluency
- First Grade
 - Nonsense Word Fluency
 - Oral Reading Fluency
- Second Grade
 - Oral Reading Fluency only

Fluent reading was emphasized as a key predictor of reading comprehension.

Administration & Data Use

- Each Acadience measure takes approximately one minute per student.
- Results allow teachers to quickly identify specific skill gaps.
- Data is used to:
 - Inform Tier 1 instruction
 - Create small instructional groups
 - Support Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions under MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support)

Color-coded performance levels were explained:

- Blue: Above benchmark
- Green: At benchmark
- Yellow: Below benchmark
- Red: Well below benchmark

These indicators guide instruction and intervention planning, not grading.



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Family Access to Results

- Families may request a printed Acadience report from their child's teacher.
- Reports include:
 - Beginning, middle, and end-of-year snapshots
 - Reading Composite Score (RCS)
 - Definitions of assessment terms and measures

Guidance for Home Support

Strategies shared for families to support literacy at home included:

- Playing sound-based games (e.g., "I Spy" with beginning sounds)
- Practicing phoneme segmentation using everyday objects
- Supporting decoding of unfamiliar or nonsense words
- Encouraging repeated oral reading to build fluency
- Emphasizing both reading speed and comprehension

Benchmarks were shared:

- End of Grade 1: 60 words per minute
- End of Grade 2: 120 words per minute

Presentation: MAP Growth

Presenter: Dr. Jennifer Matting, Senior Account Manager, NWEA

Overview & Purpose

- Dr. Matting introduced MAP Growth as a universal screener used across New York City schools.
- MAP Growth is administered three times per year (beginning, middle, and end of year).
- Grade usage:
 - Math: Grades K–10
 - Reading: Grades 3–10



- The mid-year assessment window is currently open; schools typically allow students time to re-adjust to school routines before testing.

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Assessment Design

- MAP Growth is:
 - Not pass/fail
 - Not graded
 - Adaptive, meaning:
 - Questions increase in difficulty when answered correctly
 - Questions decrease in difficulty when answered incorrectly
- The adaptive nature is intentional and designed to identify each student's instructional "sweet spot."

RIT Scores

- MAP Growth provides students with a RIT score, which:
 - Represents a student's current instructional level
 - Is used to measure growth over time
 - Has meaning only when compared across testing windows
- Students may encounter questions they do not know; this is expected and appropriate.

Instructional Use

- MAP Growth data is used to:
 - Individualize instruction
 - Create and adjust small groups
 - Inform MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) decisions
 - Monitor student growth from fall to winter to spring
- Schools use aggregated data to:
 - Identify instructional strengths and areas of need
 - Make curriculum and instructional adjustments
 - Communicate trends and needs to families



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Family Reports

- Schools can generate Family Reports following each testing window.
- Families are encouraged to request these reports if they are not automatically distributed.
- Family reports include:
 - Explanation of MAP Growth and RIT scores
 - Student achievement percentiles (national comparison)
 - Student growth metrics over time
 - Strengths and areas for improvement in math and reading
- Percentiles reflect comparison to national peers and are not percentages.

Parent Resources

- Families may preview MAP Growth questions at warmup.nwea.org.
- Additional resource links and the presentation deck will be shared with the district for distribution.
- Families were encouraged to help students approach the assessment calmly and do their best, emphasizing growth rather than performance.

Question on Report Interpretability

- A CEC member raised concerns regarding the interpretability of MAP Growth family reports, particularly when:
 - Students perform above grade level but demonstrate low growth percentiles
 - Growth trajectories trend downward toward national averages
- A specific case example was referenced (without identifying information):
 - Student showed high achievement but low growth percentiles in math and reading
 - Family report data appeared confusing without additional context

Response

- Dr. Matting confirmed the interpretation was accurate:
 - A student may be high achieving while not growing at the same rate as peers
 - Growth percentiles reflect rate of improvement, not absolute performance
- Acknowledged the need for:



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- Improved explanation and communication of growth data
- Better support for educators and families in understanding reports
- Emphasized that high-achieving students also require differentiation and MTSS supports
- Commitment made to provide feedback to NWEA regarding:
 - Family report clarity
 - Teacher and family guidance materials
- Agreement that improving explainability would reduce confusion and improve instructional use of data

Follow-Up Actions

- Presenter agreed to:
 - Share Family Guide links and additional resources
 - Provide feedback to NWEA on improving report clarity
- District leadership acknowledged the importance of professional learning for educators around MAP Growth data interpretation.

• Committee Reports

None

• Public Speaking

None

• Old Business

None

• New Business

None

• Safety Update

- It was noted that the district now has a new Chancellor.
- The previous Chancellor had indicated an intention to meet with the council regarding safety concerns raised at a prior town hall but did not follow through.
- The Council will now reach out to FACE to seek clarity and request a meeting with the new Chancellor.
- Updates will be provided at a future meeting.



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Parent Elected Member (PEP) Report

Presenter: Debra Altman, Parent Elected Member for Staten Island (CEC 31)

Overview of the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP)

- The PEP consists of **24 members** and votes on:
 - NYC-wide public school contracts
 - Chancellor's Regulations
 - School mergers, building usage, and capacity plans (including the Five-Year Capital Plan)
- The new Chancellor will join the PEP as a **non-voting member**.

Upcoming PEP Meeting

- **Date:** Wednesday, January 28, 2026
- **Time:** 6:00 PM
- **Location:** Susan E. Wagner / Petrides Complex, Staten Island
- Public participation and speaker sign-up available via the NYC DOE website.

Actions from December 17 PEP Meeting (Bronx)

- **Approved unanimously:** Creation of NYC's first **Hip-Hop School of Music**, recognizing the Bronx as the birthplace of hip-hop.
- **Approved:** Mid-Year Budget Transparency Review for the 2025–2026 school year.
- **Chancellor's Regulation D-210 (CEC/Citywide Council Code of Conduct):**
 - Previously suspended due to litigation.
 - Revised and reinstated to ensure protections for council and community members.
 - Approved by the PEP with amendments.
- **Contracts Review:**
 - 30 contracts reviewed.
 - Significant discussion centered on **Artificial Intelligence-related contracts**.
 - Four AI-related contracts (EPS Operations, Khan Academy, Kidum, Lumi's Story) were **removed from voting** pending further policy guidance.

Artificial Intelligence in Schools



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- PEP emphasized that it is **not prepared to approve AI contracts citywide** without safeguards.
- Noted:
 - AI is already in use in approximately **208 NYC schools**.
 - A forthcoming **NYC AI Playbook** will establish citywide guidance.
 - A central AI task force will address data privacy, instructional use, and safeguards.
- **Chancellor’s Regulation A-820** was updated to protect student data privacy.
- **Pending NYS Legislation:**
 - Proposed bill **A-9190** (Nov. 2025) would limit AI use below the high school level, with exceptions for diagnostics and special education.
 - Would amend NYS Education Law §115.
- PEP affirmed commitment to responsible, limited, and safe AI implementation and to reflecting parent and community concerns.

President’s Council Report

Presenter: Melissa Paradis, District 31 Presidents’ Council President

- Reviewed **school financial reporting requirements**, including:
 - Interim financial reports covering July 1 – January 15
 - Guidance on presenting reports to parents and principals
- Discussed upcoming school activities.
- Conducted elections to fill vacancies.
- **Vice President elected** for District 31 President’s Council.
- **Next Meeting:**
 - **Date:** January 20
 - **Time:** 10:00 AM
 - **Format:** Virtual

Additional Discussion – Fundraising Regulations

- Clarification provided regarding **fundraising caps and snack sales:**
 - Multiple snack sales during the year count as **one fundraiser**, regardless of frequency.
 - Principal approval is required for snack sales, particularly during instructional hours.
- **Prohibited Activities:**
 - Gambling of any kind, including:
 - Birthday boards
 - Anniversary boards



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- Super Bowl boards
- Bingo
 - These prohibitions have been in place since the updated regulations.
- **Permitted Activities:**
 - Basket raffles are allowed.
- Follow-up communication from DOE Legal will be shared with President’s Council leadership.

● **Closing Remarks**

Thank you to all the wonderful District Team for attending tonight, all our District Principals, our representatives from our local elected offices, UFT and FACE. We are grateful for your continued partnership and support. CEC31 is always here to listen and support you. If you need assistance, please don’t hesitate to reach out via email at CEC31@schools.nyc.gov or visit our website at www.CEC31.org

● **Motion to Adjourn**

Motion 1st: Erin Ulitto

Motion 2nd: Joseph Bird

- **Meeting Adjourned 9:15pm**