



**COMMUNITY  
EDUCATION  
COUNCIL  
DISTRICT 31**

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Daniella Caputo  
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**COUNCIL MEMBERS**  
Melissa Cosentino  
Amanda Kelly  
Erin Ulitto

**VACANT**  
Student Members  
Administrative Assistant

**CEC 31 Hybrid Business Meeting and Calendar  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday September 8th, 2025**

**Annual Meeting**

• **Call to Order** at 6:10 PM and welcomed by Acting Interim President Lucia Curatolo-Boylan

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

• **Roll call of Members**

***In-Person:** Daniella Caputo, Teresa Circelli, Melissa Cosentino, Lucia Curatolo-Boylan, Jimmy Desiderato, Andrew Guido, Amanda Kelly, Kristie Montalvan, Jessica Reyes & Erin Ulitto*

***Absent:** Joseph Bird, Frank Marino*

• **Election of Officers**

***Chair Pro Tem***

- Andrew Guido was nominated as Chair Pro Tem and accepted the nomination
- Roll Call Vote was taken and Andrew Guido was unanimously elected as Chair Pro Tem

***Election of President***

- Chair Pro Tem opened the floor for Nominations
- Lucia Curatolo-Boylan was nominated and accepted the nomination
- No other nominations were given
- Chair Pro Tem closed the floor for nominations
- Roll Call Vote was taken and Lucia Curatolo-Boylan was unanimously elected as President for 2025-2026 school year
- President Curatolo-Boylan then took over the remaining elections

***Election of First Vice President***

- The floor was opened for nominations
- Jimmy Desiderato was nominated and accepted the nomination
- No other nominations were given
- President Boylan closed the floor for nominations
- Roll Call Vote was taken and Jimmy Desiderato was unanimously elected as First Vice President for 2025-2026 school year



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***Election of Second Vice President***

- Floor was opened for nominations
- Frank Marino was nominated and the nomination was accepted on his behalf as he had provided documentation of his desire to run for the position prior to the evening's meeting
- No other nominations were given
- President Boylan closed the floor for nominations
- Roll Call Vote was taken and Frank Marino was unanimously elected as Second Vice President for 2025-2026 school year

***Election of Treasurer***

- Floor was opened for nominations
- Joseph Bird was nominated and the nomination was accepted on his behalf as he had provided documentation of his desire to run for the position prior to the evening's meeting
- No other nominations were given
- President Boylan closed the floor for nominations
- Roll Call Vote was taken and Joseph Bird was unanimously elected as Treasurer for 2025-2026 school year

***Election of Recording Secretary***

- The floor was opened for nominations
- Andrew Guido was nominated and accepted the nomination
- No other nominations were given
- President Boylan closed the floor for nominations
- Roll Call Vote was taken and Andrew Guido was unanimously elected as Recording Secretary for 2025-2026 school year

***Congratulations Extended to all newly elected officers***

**● Motion to Adjourn**

**Motion 1st:** *Erin Ulitto*

**Motion 2nd:** *Amanda Kelly*

**● Meeting Adjourned 6:23pm**



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**Business Meeting**

- **Call to Order** at 6:37 PM and welcomed by President Lucia Curatolo-Boylan

- **Welcome Remarks:**

President Curatolo-Boylan welcomes families to the new school year and reaffirms its commitment to promoting policies that support every child’s academic, social, and emotional success. Families are encouraged to actively participate in their child’s education and maintain open communication with teachers, principals, and district leaders. The CEC emphasizes the importance of family involvement and looks forward to a strong partnership throughout the 2025–2026 school year.

- **Interpretation services in Russian, Mandarin, and Spanish provided**

- **Roll call of Members**

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

***Absent:** Joseph Bird*

- **Approval August 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:** *Jimmy Desiderato*

Meeting minutes were approved by all members

- **Review Member Absences**

- Following members were absent in July
  - Melissa Cosentino
  - Jimmy Desiderato
  - Jessica Reyes

**Motion to Approve Absences as Excused or Unexcused**

**Motion 1st:** *Daniella Caputo*

**Motion 2nd:** *Teresa Cirelli*



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

- **2025-2026 CEC31 Budget Review**

- **Budget Line Items not eligible for re-allocation**
  - Member Reimbursement due to fixed number to ensure all member reimbursements paid out
  - Website Funding as contract has already been renewed and payment pending
- **Opened the Floor for Suggested or Recommended Edits**
  - Andrew Guido confirmed that food allowance line is based off of needed funds from previous year and wanted to ensure contract with website company includes mandatory updates
  - No additional changes or edits were made
- **Motion to Approve Draft Budget and move to Calendar Meeting for a Vote**

**Motion 1st: Melissa Cosentino**

**Motion 2nd: Andrew Guido**

- **President's Report**

- **ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

- Final Interviews have begun for our vacant Administrative Assistant position and were completed and shared with all Council members. After careful consideration and a consensus of Council we have decided to offer the position to Lauren Ricchichi
- We hope that Central will expedite the hiring due to our prolonged time without an assistant as well as the upcoming Town Hall

- **PEP PARENT MEMBER VACANCY:**

- The Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) is a 24-member voting body overseeing NYC Public Schools, made up of community leaders from across the city. It ensures equitable access to quality education and approves key policies, including school closures, co-locations, major contracts, Gifted and Talented programs, and the school budget.
- PEP is currently seeking a Staten Island representative, elected by the CEC President.
- To apply, submit the application to [PEPParentApplications@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:PEPParentApplications@schools.nyc.gov) by September 30, 2025.

- **CENTRAL LEADERSHIP CHANGES:**

- Two top NYC Education Department officials, Dan Weisberg, Deputy Chancellor and Emma Vadehra Deputy Chancellor of Operations, have stepped down.
- Chancellor Melissa Aviles-Ramos has appointed Isabel DiMola Brooklyn District 21 Superintendent and Kevin Moran, Director of Operations as



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their replacements. Weisberg and Vadehra led major initiatives like curriculum changes, class size reductions, and new school openings.

- CEC31 congratulates Kevin Moran, a longtime Staten Island advocate who has directly helped SI families and visibly changed the face of Staten Island schools for the better, on his well-deserved promotion.

- **CEC PRESIDENT'S CHANCELLOR MEETING:**

- The Chancellor's monthly virtual CCEC Presidents' meeting with Chancellor Melissa Aviles-Ramos will take place on Monday, September 15, 2025, from 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM.
- If there are any questions or topics you'd like the Chancellor to be aware of before the meeting, feel free to email the specific question you'd like addressed.

- **ROAD TO BETTER BUSING RALLY**

- The Road to Better Busing Coalition is rallying to demand: Yellow Bus Service that works everyday on time, Access to afterschool, summer, & weekend busing, and modern system that puts students & families first Rally to demand better bus service!
- Monday, September 22nd 12-1pm In front of the City Hall steps

- **Councilmember Reports**

Council Members as you know we have begun preparations for our Town Hall meeting with Chancellor Aviles-Ramos on October 6th.

- As part of that preparation CEC31 surveys our Staten Island families on the issues that matter most. We have compiled a draft of that survey shared previously with CEC members.
- Opened the floor to discussing the finalization of that survey so that it can be circulated to families this week as time is of the essence.
  - 1. Bullying & Respect for All (RFA) Initiative
    - Key Point: The Respect for All (RFA) program is working to reduce bullying incidents.
    - Reporting: Andrew Guido and D31 CEC31 discussed the online reporting system and the role of school-based RFA liaisons.
    - Clarification of Bullying:
    - Emphasis placed on defining bullying accurately.
    - Survey includes a comprehensive definition covering harassment due to race, religion, gender identity, disability, immigration status, etc.
    - Suggestion to make the definition clearer by moving the long parenthetical explanation to the end of the question.



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- 2. Survey Development – Chancellor Engagement
  - Purpose: Identify top concerns of Staten Island families to inform Chancellor Town Hall questions.
  - 
  - 
  - 
  - Structure:
    - Aim for 20 questions total.
    - Survey not sent to Chancellor; only used to inform what topics matter most to families.
- 3. Proposed Survey Changes and Feedback:
  - A. Reordering of Topics
    - Cell Phone Use: Agreed to move to the top of the survey due to high parent interest.
    - Bullying/SEL: Moved further down to avoid “doomsday” tone.
    - Academics: Suggested to move academic-related questions up to better balance tone.
  - B. Cell Phone Policy
    - Discussed whether to include "disciplinary actions" in cell phone usage responses.
    - Final wording to include: “Accessibility for emergency reasons” instead of “safety.”
  - C. Hard Lockdown / Active Shooter Drills
    - New question proposed regarding staff training for active shooter scenarios.
    - Consensus: Include question in survey.
  - D. Suspension & Discipline Policy
    - Concerns raised about lack of educational intervention during suspensions.
    - Two questions retained:
    - General views on DOE suspension policies.
    - Whether suspended students should be required to attend alternative learning sites.
  - E. Safety Transfers
    - Original question on reallocation of students designated as safety transfers to be revised for clarity.



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- New wording: “Do you believe safety transfers are being used as defined in your school?”
- F. Additional Suspension Concerns
  - New question approved: “How concerned are you about the impact of students with extensive suspension histories being transferred into your child’s school?”
  - Question about multiple safety transfers per school was removed.
- G. Co-location and Special Education
  - Reviewed inclusion of co-location and District 75 integration.
  - Reviewed and agreed to rephrase COVID-era special education IEP support question to reflect current concerns.
- 4. Survey Tone and Content Balance
  - Several members raised concerns that the survey may appear overly negative or alarmist.
  - Suggested adjustments:
    - Move academic and curriculum-related questions closer to the top.
    - Reduce or consolidate SEL and CRSE (Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education) items that may be less pressing for families now.
- 5. Meeting Logistics for Town Hall
  - Options discussed for when to hold business/calendar meeting in relation to Chancellor’s Town Hall:
  - Agreed: Conduct business meeting prior to the Town Hall on October 6 from 5:30 – 6:30 PM.
  - Town Hall with the Chancellor to begin at 6:30 PM.
- 6. Next Steps
  - Final edits to survey questions will be made by D31 CEC31.
  - Survey to be redistributed to members for final review before launch.
  - Goal: Launch survey within the week to gather data for Chancellor engagement.

Council Members Liaison schools & Committee Review:



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- Joseph Bird:
  - PS 13, PS 35, PS 57, PS 78, IS 27, PS/IS 80
  - Resolution CHAIR, Construction & Facilities, and Safety & Transportation
- Daniella Caputo:
  - PS 20, PS 21, PS 22, PS 44, IIS 24
  - Resolution CHAIR, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and Health & Wellness
- Teresa Cirelli
  - PS 50, PS 53, PS 68, PS 73, IS 28
  - Diversity Equity & Inclusion, Curriculum, and Special Education
- Melissa Cosentino:
  - PS 3, PS 5, PS 29, PS 36, PS 42, IS 75
  - Curriculum CHAIR, Gifted & Talented, and Safety & Transportation
- Lucia Curatolo-Boylan
  - PS 9, PS/IS 48, IS 49, IS 63, PS 84, IS 85 TWYLS
  - Construction & Facilities CHAIR, Resolution, & Special Education
- Jimmy Desiderato:
  - PS/IS 26, PS 52, PS 58, PS 69, IS 51, IS 72
  - Safety & Transportation CHAIR, Parent Engagement and Special Education
- Andrew Guido
  - PS ?, PS 4, PS 8, PS 39, PS 46, IS 61
  - Construction & Facilities, Gifted & Talented CHAIR, and Parent Engagement
- Amanda Kelly
  - PS 6, PS 10, PS 16, PS 23, PS 31, IS 34
  - Resolution, Health & Wellness, & Parent Engagement CHAIR
- Frank Marino
  - PS 30, PS 32, PS 41, PS 55, PS 62, IS 2
  - Health & Wellness CHAIR, Construction & Facilities, and Parent Engagement
- Kristie Montalvan
  - All D75 co-located schools
  - Diversity Equity & Inclusion, Health & Wellness, and Special Education CHAIR



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- Jessica Reyes
  - PS 38, PS 45, PS 54, PS 56, PS 59, PS/IS 861
  - Diversity Equity & Inclusion CHAIR, Health & Wellness, and Curriculum
- Erin Ulitto
  - PS 1, PS 18, PS 19, PS 60, PS 65, IS 7
  - Safety & Transportation, Special Education, & Curriculum

● **Old Business**

None

● **New Business**

None

● **Motion to Adjourn**

**Motion 1st:** *Danielle Caputo*

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

● **Meeting Adjourned 7:21pm**

## Calendar Meeting

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

● **Welcome Remarks:**

President Curatolo-Boylan welcomes families to the new school year and reaffirms its commitment to promoting policies that support every child's academic, social, and emotional success. Families are encouraged to actively participate in their child's education and maintain open communication with teachers, principals, and district leaders. The CEC emphasizes the importance of family involvement and looks forward to a strong partnership throughout the 2025–2026 school year.

● **Interpretation services in Russian, Mandarin, and Spanish provided**

● **Roll call of Members**

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

***Absent:*** *Joseph Bird*

● **Approval August Draft Calendar Meeting Minutes**



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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:** *Jimmy Desiderato*

Meeting minutes were approved by all members

• **Vote on Excused Member Absences**

- Following members were absent in July
  - Melissa Cosentino
  - Jimmy Desiderato
  - Jessica Reyes
- Councilmembers unanimously voted each councilmember's absence as excused

• **2025-2026 CEC31 Budget Vote**

- Presented Approved Draft 2025-2026 Budget
- Opened the Floor for final comments
- Councilmembers unanimously voted yes to CEC31 2025-2026 Operating Budget

• **Presentations**

- District 31 CEC Presentation on Suicide Prevention Services
- Presenters:
  - Robert Laurenzano, Student Services Manager, Office of the District Leadership Team
  - Dr. Ginny Mantello, Director of Health and Wellness, Office of the Staten Island Borough President

• **Introduction**

The meeting opened with acknowledgment of Suicide Prevention Month (September) and World Suicide Prevention Day (September 10).

Focus: Raising awareness of suicide prevention resources, school-based supports, and borough-wide initiatives.

• **Key Topics Covered**

- Overview of New York City Public Schools' Mental Health Website:
- Emphasis on 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline as a critical, accessible resource.
- Shared brochure: "What Every Parent and Caregiver Needs to Know" about suicide prevention.
- Promoted Crisis Text Line: Text GOT5 to 741741 for 24/7, anonymous support.
- Warning Signs Training:



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- Highlighted the “FACTS” framework used in staff training:
  - Feelings: Hopelessness, worthlessness, etc.
  - Actions: Reckless behavior, substance use, etc.
  - Changes: Notable behavioral or personality changes.
  - Threats: Direct or indirect mentions of self-harm or suicide.
  - Situations: Life stressors that may trigger crises.
- Staff Training:
  - All school staff are trained to recognize warning signs and make “warm handoffs” to mental health professionals.
  - Emphasis on prevention through early identification and intervention.
- **Presentation by Dr. Ginny Mantello**
  - Background & National Context:
    - Suicide remains a leading cause of preventable death among youth ages 12–19.
    - LGBTQ+ youth, youth of color, and those with behavioral health issues are at higher risk.
    - Stigma remains a barrier to care.
  - Emphasized the need for "Creating Hope Through Action", the theme of this year's Suicide Prevention Month.
  - Key Statistics Shared:
    - 40–45% of students report persistent sadness or hopelessness.
    - 20–25% of high schoolers have seriously considered suicide in the past year.
    - 10% have attempted suicide; 3% required medical attention.
  - Staten Island Blueprint for Youth Mental Health
    - Overview:
      - Developed in collaboration with Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and Medicine.
      - Staten Island selected to pilot the blueprint via a \$3.7M grant for
  - Overview: Key Components:
    - Full alignment with Chancellor's Regulations on suicide prevention.
    - Training for all school crisis teams on
    - Suicide-safe schools
    - At-risk student support
    - Safety planning
    - Clinical providers trained in CAMS (Collaborative Assessment & Management of Suicidality).
    - Addition of DBT (Dialectical Behavioral Therapy) trainings.
    - New Systems Being Developed:
      - Web-based platform for schools to:
        - Complete suicide risk assessments
        - Obtain parental consent
        - Refer students to crisis services
        - Track outcomes with closed-loop communication
      - Mobile Crisis Support:
        - Jewish Board covers 8 AM–8 PM with mobile crisis teams.



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- Richmond University Medical Center handles evenings and adult services.  
Goal: Reduce emergency room visits and offer immediate outpatient support within 24–48 hours.
- Youth and Community Engagement
  - Initiatives:
    - Mental Health Youth Ambassador Programs:
    - High school and college-level peer support programs underway.
    - Parent & Community Trainings:
      - QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Gatekeeper Training
      - Triple P parenting programs
      - Trainings for clergy and other community leaders
    - Social Media Campaigns:
      - Launched via TYSA Behavioral Health Coalition
      - Regular posts (Tues–Fri at noon) on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok
- Available Resources (Shared During Meeting)
  - Crisis Text Line: Text GOT5 to 741741
  - 988 National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
  - Jewish Board One-Call Line: 1-844-ONE-CALL (844-663-2255)
  - Trevor Project: Crisis support for LGBTQ+ youth (13–24)
  - National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Teen Helpline
  - SafeTalk Program (DOHMH-funded) for youth 14–18
  - Flyers, resource one-pagers, and training materials to be distributed via parent coordinators and posted to the district website.
- Closing
  - Parents encouraged to:
    - Learn warning signs
    - Know their school’s mental health team
    - familiarize themselves with community-based mental health providers
  - Presenters emphasized:
    - Suicide is preventable
    - Help is available
    - Community action and awareness are essential
    - Action Items:
      - Distribute mental health resource one-pager through schools and CEC channels.
      - Promote Crisis Text Line, 988, and local resources to all school communities.
      - Support and expand training opportunities for staff, parents, and community members.

Thanks to Robert Laurenzano, Dr. Ginny Mantello, and all attendees for their time, insight, and commitment to supporting youth mental health.

**● President’s Report**

- **PEP PARENT MEMBER VACANCY:**
  - The Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) is a 24-member voting body overseeing NYC Public Schools, made up of community leaders from across



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the city. It ensures equitable access to quality education and approves key policies, including school closures, co-locations, major contracts, Gifted and Talented programs, and the school budget. PEP is currently seeking a Staten Island representative, elected by the CEC President. To apply, submit the application to [PEPParentApplications@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:PEPParentApplications@schools.nyc.gov) by September 30, 2025.

- **WAITLISTS:**
  - Please be advised Middle and high school waitlists will close on Friday, September 12. This is the last day that a waitlist offer can be made. Families who missed the 3-K, pre-K, or kindergarten deadlines can add their child to waitlists using [MySchools](#) (Open external link). These waitlists will close on Friday, September 19. This is the last day that a waitlist offer can be made.
  - Bay Street Family Welcome Center 365 Bay Street, Room 102, Staten Island, NY 10301 (Open external link)
  - Email: [BayStreetFWC@Schools.nyc.gov](mailto:BayStreetFWC@Schools.nyc.gov) with any questions you may have regarding enrollment
- **CENTRAL LEADERSHIP CHANGES:**
  - Two top NYC Education Department officials, Dan Weisberg, Deputy Chancellor and Emma Vadehra Deputy Chancellor of Operations, have stepped down. Chancellor Melissa Aviles-Ramos has appointed Isabel DiMola Brooklyn District 21 Superintendent and Kevin Moran, Director of Operations as their replacements. Weisberg and Vadehra led major initiatives like curriculum changes, class size reductions, and new school openings. Our CEC congratulates Kevin Moran, a longtime Staten Island advocate who has directly helped SI families and visibly changed the face of Staten Island schools for the better, on his well-deserved promotion.
- **SCHOOL SAFETY LEADERSHIP CHANGES:**
  - The NYPD has shifted oversight of school safety agents to First Deputy Commissioner Tania Kinsella, reversing an earlier plan to place it under Chief of Department John Chell following public criticism. Previously under the Community Affairs Bureau, the move aims to improve oversight without changing agents' roles. Critics had opposed Chell's appointment due to his history with aggressive policing. The change comes amid ongoing debates over youth crime and unfulfilled promises to move school safety from NYPD to the Department of Education.
- **NO MORE BLUE RIBBONS:**
  - The Trump administration has abruptly ended the National Blue Ribbon Schools program, which since 1982 recognized top-performing schools and those closing achievement gaps. Framed as part of a push to shift education authority to states, the decision came just after states submitted nominations—some schools had already been told they'd won. While states are urged to create their own awards, critics say the Blue Ribbon's national prestige is irreplaceable. Originally launched under Reagan, the program was briefly canceled in 1992 before being reinstated due to public outcry.
- **FREE FALL FESTIVAL:**
  - Join the JCC of Staten Island at a FREE Fall Harvest Festival! The annual outdoor festival features fun for families with kids of all ages, including inflatables, face painting, balloon art, Rosh Hashanah and fall crafts, and



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more! There will also be program demos for programs like My Grown Up & Me classes, sports, and music. In case of inclement weather, the festival will move inside. FREE Fall Harvest Festival

- Location: JCC Bernikow 1466 Manor Road Staten Island, New York 10314

- **SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY 9/10:**

- Suicide is a major public health problem with far-reaching social, emotional and economic consequences. Staten Island has the second highest rate of self-harm hospitalizations of all the boroughs with the majority of those cases being children ages 10-19, and we know that each suicide profoundly affects many more people. Suicide remains a critical community issue, affecting individuals, families and our Staten Island schools. We'd like to provide some resources to families who may be facing this issue
- Know the signs because talk can save lives.
- 988 Lifeline:

- If you need to talk, the 988 Lifeline is there.
- At the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, we understand that life's challenges can sometimes be difficult. Whether you're facing mental health struggles, emotional distress, alcohol or drug use concerns, or just need someone to talk to, our caring counselors are here for you. You are not alone. You can call, text or chat
- <https://988lifeline.org/>

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Visit the link in the chat to learn more about signs, risks and what you can do to help

- <https://statenilandpps.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/TSLVirtualBrochure.pdf>
- Join the AFSP for their Out of the Darkness walk to bring hope and awareness to those affected by suicide
- <https://afspwalks.donordrive.com/StatenIsland>
- Event Date: 09/14/2025

- Location: Wolfe's Pond Park, Staten Island, NY
- Schedule: Check In: 12:00 PM (EDT)
- Event Start Time: 1:00 PM (EDT)

- Contact: Felicia Gambino 646-647-7324  
[afspstateniland@gmail.com](mailto:afspstateniland@gmail.com)

- Join us for a Post-Event Baseball Game Fundraiser on Wednesday, September 17th!

- <sup>17</sup> Date: Wednesday, September 17th at 6:30pm, gates open at 5:30PM 📍 Location: Staten Island University Hospital Community Park

- Join us at the FerryHawks game on Sunday September 17th as we raise funds that will be reinvested into our Staten Island mental health resources and prevention efforts. Bring your friends, family, and neighbors to watch as the Staten Island FerryHawks vs. York Revolution at 6:30pm, gates will open at 5:30pm. 20% of each ticket purchased through this link will go to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention!

- Secure your tickets here:  
<https://www.gofevo.com/event/afsp2025>

- **9/11 REMEMBRANCE:**



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- With our upcoming day of remembrance it's vital to reflect on the lessons of 9/11—a day that deeply impacted our nation and forever changed our world. The attacks took 2,977 lives across New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C., and while many students today were not yet born, the effects still touch many of our Staten Island families.
- 9/11 taught us the power of unity and resilience. In its aftermath, people came together in support and solidarity—values we must continue to nurture in our schools and communities. It also reminded us of the dangers of hatred and intolerance. We honor those we lost by instilling in future generations the values of compassion, strength, and unity. Never forget.
- Wagner College 9/11 Memorial Ceremony September 11 @ 8:30 am - 12:00 pm Outdoor Trautmann Square will host its annual campus-wide ceremony to honor the memory of those we lost on September 11, 2001. Please join us as we reflect on the 24th anniversary of those attacks and honor those lost.
  - Rain Location: Foundation Hall - Manzulli Board Room
- Angel's Circle A Sept. 11 anniversary ceremony will be held at Angels' Circle on Sept. 10 at 7 p.m. Angels' Circle, located at the intersection of Hylan Boulevard and Fingerboard Road, is a memorial garden filled with the faces of the more than 200 Staten Islanders who lost their lives on 9/11. Photographs mounted on stakes placed in the ground mingle with the angel statues that dot the memorial, referencing the "angels" lost in the attacks.
- Notre Dame Club of Staten Island
  - This year's "Eve of Solemn Remembrance" will be held in Our Lady of Pity R.C. Church, 1616 Richmond Ave. in Bulls Head beginning at 7 p.m. with a presentation of sacred music, followed at 7:30 p.m. by a concelebrated Mass lead by Bishop John O'Hara, Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of New York, and Bishop Peter Byrne, Auxiliary Bishop of New York and Pastor of Blessed Sacrament R.C. Church.
- Postcards Memorial
  - Borough President Vito Fossella will host the annual September 11th Memorial Ceremony at the Postcards Memorial on Wednesday, Sept. 11, at 6:30 p.m. Enter from Richmond Terrace at Hamilton Avenue or the Staten Island University Hospital Community Park. Parking is available at Empire Outlets at Wall Street.
- **TOPICS OUR CEC WILL BE FOCUSING ON THIS YEAR:**
  - As the new school year begins, NYC's public schools are navigating major leadership, policy, and legal changes at the local, state, and federal levels. Our CEC will remain on top of the issues on our local level but parents should be aware
  - **Key Developments:**
    - 1. Mayoral Election Could Reshape School Leadership
      - Mayor Eric Adams is struggling in polls ahead of the November election.
      - Frontrunner Zohran Mamdani proposes changes like scaling back mayoral control of schools and expanding child care and is backed by the UFT



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- A new mayor would likely replace Chancellor Melissa Aviles-Ramos and overhaul current education initiatives. Every 4 years back to square one
- 2. Class Size Reduction Law in Effect
  - 60% of classrooms must now meet new size caps (20–25 students).
  - The city hired over 3,700 additional teachers and spent \$450 million to comply.
  - While smaller classes may improve educational outcomes, training all new inexperienced staff, and ensuring equity across schools remain key challenges.
- 3. Statewide Cellphone Ban Implemented
  - All NYC schools must now enforce a “bell-to-bell” ban on phones and internet-enabled devices.
  - Schools can choose how to enforce the ban (e.g., locked pouches, lockers).
  - The policy includes exceptions and \$16 million in implementation funding, but enforcement may be difficult
- 4. Immigration Enforcement Impacting Students
  - ICE arrests under Trump’s second term have included NYC public school students and families.
  - Advocates fear the rise in deportations may deter attendance and extracurricular participation.
  - Declining immigration could worsen already shrinking school enrollment.
- 5. Curriculum Overhauls Expand
  - City mandates for approved reading and math curricula are extending into middle schools.
  - Over 180 middle schools are now under these mandates.
  - Officials tout test score gains, but similar improvements in non-mandated schools and charters cast doubt on effectiveness claims.
- 6. Statewide Graduation Requirements Being Rewritten
  - The Board of Regents is phasing out Regents exams starting in 2027–28.
  - New “Portrait of a Graduate” goals will guide future diploma requirements, emphasizing skills like creativity, communication, and global citizenship.
  - Specifics on how students will be evaluated are still pending.

• **Superintendent’s Report**

- **Start of 2025–2026 School Year**
  - Superintendent Palton expressed pride in a smooth school opening across Staten Island with strong community engagement.



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- Highlighted a more collaborative district culture since his appointment.
- **Facilities & Program Updates**
  - PS 5 Addition: Opened with ~300 new seats.
  - TWYLS Program: Moved to a newly renovated site on South Avenue.
  - New Campus Opened: PS/IS 26 (Janice Blanchard Campus) now shared with D75 program PET89.
  - Visits from Deputy Chancellor Christina Foti and Chancellor Melissa Avilés-Ramos.
- **Bell-to-Bell Cell Phone Policy**
  - Early feedback from principals has been positive:
  - Students more engaged, less distracted.
  - Challenges include students not knowing the time; digital clocks being installed.
  - Approach is focused on therapeutic and educational transition away from phone dependence.
- **Leadership Changes**
  - Welcomed Dr. Joseph O'Brien as new principal of PS 3, replacing Elma Myers (retired after 30 years in DOE).
- **Teacher Hiring & Onboarding**
  - District 31 hired the most teachers citywide:
  - ~450 new hires (approx. 260 brand new to teaching).
  - Total teaching staff now: 4,700+.
  - Superintendent held virtual welcome meeting for all new teachers.
  - Additional outreach to assistant principals and deans to set tone for the year.
- **Academic Performance – State Test Results**
  - ELA Proficiency:
  - District improved by 8 percentage points, with elementary schools improving by 10 points.
  - District 31 is now ranked #8 in NYC, with second highest growth among top 10 districts.
  - Significant gains by schools:
    - PS 11, PS 19, PS 29, PS 16: +20 to +28 pts
    - PS 35, PS 9, PS 5: over 90% proficiency (PS 35 at 96%)
  - Improvements noted across all subgroups (Black, Hispanic, IEP, ENL students).
  - Math Proficiency:
    - Smaller gain: now at ~64%, above city average.
    - Achievement gaps remain, especially for Black students, IEPs, and ENLs.
    - Focus this year will shift toward improving math, potentially impacted last year by ELA emphasis.
- **Strategic Goals for 2025–2026**
  - Expand New York City Reads and launch New York City Solves for math improvement.
  - Emphasis on Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and K–2 literacy foundation.
  - Expand social-emotional programs.
  - New initiatives:
    - Swim for Life program expanding to 10+ schools.
    - Golf introduced to elementary PE at 10 schools (for skill-building and scholarship opportunities).
- **Family & Community Engagement**



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- Communication tools:
  - Website: [www.district31nyc.org](http://www.district31nyc.org)
  - Phone: 718-420-5657
  - Twitter: @CSD31SI
  - New SPED parent liaison: Rosemary Beauvais
  - Family Support Coordinator: Stacy Magnus [Smagnus@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:Smagnus@schools.nyc.gov)
  - Superintendent encouraged families to reach out respectfully via social media and direct contact.
- **Upcoming Events**
  - 9/11 Memorial:
    - Date: September 11, 8:30 AM (Breakfast at 7:30 AM)
    - Purpose: Honor lives lost, especially Staten Islanders and first responders
    - Flyer posted on district website
  - Family Resource Fair:
    - Date: Saturday, September 13, 11 AM – 2 PM
    - Location: Wagner High School
    - Open to public, especially for those affiliated with the military
    - Offers scholarships, service resources, family supports
- Superintendent Palton emphasized his 20th year in public education, thanked all stakeholders for an excellent school year launch, and expressed optimism for continued growth and student success. **Closing Remarks**
  -
- **Public Speaking**
  - **Cheryl McMillan**
    - Inquired about the status of the parent survey.
    - Cheryl expressed appreciation to Dr. Paulton for visiting parents in Fort Richmond during the summer and Labor Day weekend.
    - She emphasized the value of continued open engagement with parents.
    - Cheryl asked if liaisons will report on their assigned schools during business meetings.
    - Cheryl thanked the team and expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming year.
- **CEC31 Response:**
  - The Chancellor's Town Hall Survey will be finalized and distributed by the end of the week.
    - Distribution will be through school parent coordinators on Friday.
    - Parents will have a one-week window to complete the survey.
    - Results will be used to finalize questions for the Chancellor. Survey will be available via Google Form, but paper copies can be provided by schools for families without digital access.
  - **CEC Liaisons and School Communication**
    - Each CEC member is formally introduced to their assigned school principal.
    - Liaisons aim to meet with principals at least four times per year.



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- Reports and updates from liaisons are typically shared during business meetings.
- Liaison names are shared with parent coordinators and principals.
- Posted on the CEC31 website (once updated for the current year).
- Parents can find their liaison by visiting [www.cec31.org](http://www.cec31.org) or contacting [cec31@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:cec31@schools.nyc.gov)

● **Andrea Powell**

- Raised a serious concern about her child—and others in the district—not receiving mandated physical therapy services due to delays by the DOE (Department of Education) in transmitting CPSC orders.
- Emphasized that these services are legally required, not optional.
- Her child has already missed four days of services, with no concrete response from DOE staff aside from a generic email from Deputy Chancellor Christina Foti.
- Expressed frustration with the lack of accountability, noting multiple out-of-office replies from DOE staff, including her assigned administrator.
- Requests that the Council make the issue a priority, demand accountability from DOE leadership, push for immediate transmission of CPSC orders, ensure compliance is tracked and missed sessions are made up.

● **CEC31 Response**

- Confirmed this is a recurring issue that happens every year.
- Committed to writing a formal letter on behalf of the Council demanding immediate reinstatement of services.
- Advocating for retroactive service compensation for missed days.
- Acknowledged the system is broken and expressed regret over the lack of a systemic solution.
- Agreed to bring this topic up at Meeting with the Chancellor on 9/15

● **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.
  - 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



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- **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.

**• New Business**

Concern About Phone Access Jimmy Desiderato shared a personal incident where he was unable to contact his daughter for 45 minutes after school, causing significant distress. His daughter, who has an extensive IEP, was supposed to meet him but stayed in school with her phone turned off. He acknowledged understanding the rationale behind phone restrictions but emphasized the need for students to have access to phones during emergencies, especially for students with IEPs or other vulnerabilities. Cited concerns from other parents on social media expressing frustration over phone restrictions.

- Policy Confusion
  - Noted contradictions between the: DOE Discipline Code (which includes progressive discipline for misuse of electronic devices) and Chancellor's Regulation A-413, which prohibits suspension solely for possessing a personal electronic device.
  - He suggested this inconsistency should be clarified and raised during the upcoming meeting with Chancellor Viles.
- Additional Concerns: Field Trips



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- Jimmy reported that his daughter was told she could not have her phone during an off-site class trip, which he found particularly concerning from a safety and communication perspective.
- Acknowledgment of Broader Safety Context
  - Jimmy referenced recent mass shootings in other states as reminders of the importance of real-time communication and preparedness in schools.
  - Reiterated his support for phone restrictions in general but advocated for students retaining access to phones during emergencies.

Superintendent Roderick Palton acknowledged the concern, stating: The current phone policy is a state law, and while limitations exist, the district understands the emotional impact on parents. Referenced the recent Minneapolis school tragedy as a painful reminder of the need for effective emergency protocols.

- Emergency Communication System
  - Roderick shared that the DOE has implemented a district-wide alert system (using Gamma) to communicate with families during:
    - Drills
    - Emergencies
    - School evacuations
- Parents are urged to ensure their contact information is up-to-date (phone numbers and emails) to receive timely and accurate updates.
- Emphasized that the official alert system is the best way to avoid miscommunication and panic during emergencies.

**• Old Business**

Jimmy Desiderato raised concern that the Council's previously passed 9/11 Remembrance resolution is not being fully implemented. He emphasized that while September 11th events are important, the resolution calls for a week-long educational observance, not just a single day. Expressed the desire to ensure the district commits to honoring 9/11 consistently each year and suggested getting it on the district calendar to avoid repeated oversight. The Council confirmed the resolution calls for a week, not a month.

Roderick Palton clarified: The DOE provides schools with resources and lesson plans to commemorate 9/11, but how they are used is decided at the school level. Acknowledged that while a district event is held on September 11th, he was not previously aware of the resolution's language calling for a week-long observance. Stated he would now plan accordingly for a week-long initiative in future years based on the resolution.

**• Closing Remarks**

We're so glad to see you here, everyone. Thank you, and we hope that you'll join us again next month in October. Our CEC is hosting a town hall with Chancellor Avias Ramos on October 6th, here at the BP Hall of Science at the Patrides Educational Complex in Building A. We urge you to come and attend in person, but for those unable to join, you will be able to participate via livestream from Learning Time.



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Keep an eye out for our survey to families on the issues that you'd like the Chancellor to address, as well as the event flyer and upcoming link from both CEC and your school. Thank you to our wonderful district team for attending tonight, all our district principals on the call, our representatives from our local elected offices from the UFT and from FACE. Special thank you again to Dr. Janine Mantello for joining us. We are so grateful for your continued partnership and support. Friends, CEC31 is always here and listening, ready to help. Should you need that, don't hesitate to reach out via our email at cc31 at schools.nyc.gov, or on our website at www.cecc31.org. Thank you, everyone. We will see you in October. Have a good one. Thank you, goodnight.

• **Motion to Adjourn**

**Motion 1st:** *Erin Ulitto*

**Motion 2nd:** *Teresa Cirelli*

• **Meeting Adjourned 8:51 pm**