CEC3 Resolution Vol. 15 (P) No. 5
Resolution on Elementary School Overcrowding in District 3

Approved at the July 15, 2015 CEC3 Calendar Meeting by a unanimous vote of the Council Members present at the time of the vote (9 in favor/ 0 opposed)

WHEREAS, nearly half a million New York City public school students already attend schools that are severely overcrowded and the situation is worsening; and

WHEREAS, CSD 3 is one of the most racially and economically diverse, it is also amongst the most segregated and unequal; and

WHEREAS, according to an audit from the New York City Comptroller, one third of the City's public schools are overcrowded, and according to the Department of Education's (DOE) own data, these schools are at 138% or more of their current capacity; and

WHEREAS, a widespread consensus exists that the DOE's formula for estimating school utilization levels underestimates the actual level of overcrowding and the space needed to provide a sound basic and legal education; and

WHEREAS, as a result of poor long-range planning, co-locations, and a failure to invest in new school spaces, hundreds of schools throughout New York City have become hopelessly overcrowded; and

WHEREAS, this crisis is especially acute in District 3, where numerous elementary schools can no longer accommodate all zoned families, and waitlists have become a regular annual occurrence, including: PS199, which currently has the longest waitlist (93 students) in New York City; and PS87, and PS166, which were each forced to open an additional kindergarten class for the 2015-2016 school year; and

WHEREAS, overcrowding at numerous District 3 schools has led to the loss of cluster rooms, lunch times beginning as early as 10am, and entire grade populations with no access to gym, art and/or music; and

WHEREAS, overcrowding at numerous District 3 schools has forced many special needs students to receive their services in hallways and/or closets rather than dedicated spaces; and

WHEREAS, CEC3 has convened a Zoning Committee charged in part with investigating the severity of overcrowding in District 3 and has detailed the multitude of new residential developments in District 3 that increase the burden on already overcrowded schools; and

WHEREAS, CEC3 held a Special Calendar meeting on June 9, 2015 regarding waitlists and the deleterious effects of overcrowding on District 3 schools, and received public comment from numerous parents, Parent Teacher Association/Parent Association officers, elected officials and concerned members of the District 3 community who expressed frustration at unsatisfactory overcrowding conditions and lack of solutions offered by DOE officials present; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That CEC3 calls on DOE to immediately develop short-, intermediate- and long- term plans for alleviating District 3's overcrowding crisis; and be it further

RESOLVED, That CEC3 calls on the DOE and the Panel for Educational Policy immediately to relocate all co-located charters out of District 3 public space, and further to refrain from co-locating any additional charters into public school buildings; and be it further

RESOLVED, That CEC3 calls on DOE and district stakeholders, in our collective effort to provide the best educational experience to all District 3 families, to consider options including but not limited to: study space utilization and locations of existing DOE schools under the jurisdiction of CEC3, enrollment and waitlist policy updates, and zoning modifications.