



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 3

154 West 93rd Street New York, New York 10025 - Room 204 Tel (212) 678-2782 Fax (212) 678-2804 Email: CEC3@schools.nyc.gov

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First Vice President

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October 30, 2017

Chancellor Carmen Fariña
New York City Department of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10001

Dear Chancellor Fariña,

We, the members of Community Education Council, District 3 ("CEC 3"), are dismayed and distressed to hear from CSD3 Superintendent Altschul that the Department of Education does not intend to share potential changes to 2018 school enrollment and configuration with the public until December 2017. All families, regardless of residence or political participation, deserve to know about the schools for which they are applying. **Middle School applications must be submitted by December 1, 2017. Kindergarten Connect opens November 28th. With a deadline for Kindergarten applications scheduled on January 12th changes proposed will be voted on by PEP AFTER Kindergarten Connect closes.** It is wholly unacceptable to ask families to choose schools without letting them know what schools will be open or closed, what grades they serve and an estimate of student enrollment size.

CEC 3 was informed on October 25, 2017 that the DOE will not publicly present its plans to merge PS185 and PS208 in Harlem OR the PS165 truncation and concomitant expansion of Mott Hall II (M862) until December at the earliest, for a Panel for Educational Policy vote in January 2018.

CEC 3 has repeatedly asked for timely information and presentations from the DOE on these potential changes. The CEC had earlier requested that Superintendent Altschul attend the **November 2nd, 2017 CEC 3 Middle School Committee meeting** to address specifically families at PS 165 and more broadly all District 3 families who are a part of the Middle School process about the potential truncation of PS 165's middle school grades. The CEC has repeatedly asked the superintendent and the Office of District Planning to address families about these potential changes in District 3 Harlem.

CEC 3 has added a Special Calendar meeting to our November 8th business meeting so that Office of District Planning can present data that it compiled and shared last week; however, we respectfully request that ALL 2018 planned changes be included in this presentation so that stakeholders can begin the work of preparing in the school communities.

These major changes are subject to implementation for the fall of 2018, which means that FOUR school communities in D3 have now been left in confusing limbo. Our concerns include that:

1. The DOE promised this spring that plans would be communicated to schools in the fall. We were initially told that PS 165 truncation would be voted on at the November Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) meeting, then told it was moved back to December PEP and more recently told the January PEP. This moving deadline shows a lack of consideration to the families involved.

2. 2018 admissions choices are already underway and prospective parents can't be given complete information by school leaders.
3. Current parents are unsure of long term plans and are already planning to leave
4. Harlem Link Charter School has recently submitted a renewal asking for increased size, potentially putting more pressure on 185/208.
5. P.S.185/208 parents want to know which school name, leader, and curricula will prevail in the merge.
6. P.S. 165 5th grade parents have been left in completely in the dark because they haven't been told that they need to "apply" to other schools. Application deadline for Middle School is **December 1.**
7. Middle School applicants across the district need an accurate picture of each school. If Mott Hall II is to be expanded, students and families deserve to know that before they apply
8. Mott Hall II is the District 3 Middle School best positioned to expand. It is the single most diverse middle school in the district, across racial, economic and academic lines. The CEC 3 Middle School Committee would like to see the expansion of programs such as Mott Hall II that increase the diversity of our Middle Schools.
9. If PS 165 is *not* truncated, they have already been hindered from functioning successfully in 2018. The school did not present at the two primary recruiting events this year based on the premise that they would not be accepting incoming students.

Superintendent Altschul informed CEC 3 on October 25, 2017 that the merger wasn't a significant enough change or contentious enough to warrant the timely attention that was promised earlier in the year. Both of these significant changes were matters that the parent community largely felt could be worked out to agreeable ends. Unfortunately, by keeping families in the dark the DOE has escalated an amicable situation into one of stress and strife. Forcing parents into the position of making uninformed choice serves neither the students nor the schools.

CEC3 requests that

1. Superintendent Altschul, or a representative from the Department of Education, present all changes to 2018 middle school configuration and enrollment size at the CEC 3 Middle School Committee Meeting **November 2, 2017**
2. Office of District Planning present to the CEC 3 Special Calendar Meeting on **November 8th, 2017** any change to 2018 elementary school configurations and enrollment
3. CEC 3 be engaged as an active partner with the DOE. CEC 3 offers unique insight and access to our district 3 community and as the elected representatives of this parent body we should be engaged with DOE at every stage of planning for our schools, including the earliest iterations when "ideas" are still being developed. The Council has been proactive in the community and is happy to develop next steps as a partner with the DOE. To that end we request a conference call between the CEC and the DOE as soon as possible to develop a strategy to move forward.

Despite this late date CEC 3 hopes to work with the Department of Education to find changes for 2018 that best serve our district families.

Sincerely,

Community Education Council District 3

cc: District 3 Superintendent Ilene Altschul
Elizabeth Rose, Deputy Chancellor Operations

Eric Herman, Associate Director of Planning
Borough President Gale A. Brewer
City Council Member Mark Levine
City Council Member Bill Perkins
City Council Member Helen Rosenthal
Manhattan Community Board 7 Chair Roberta Semer
Manhattan Community Board 10 Chair Cicely Harris
Aracelis Castellán Folk, Principal P.S. 165
Jane Murphy, Principal, P.S. 185
Susan Green, Principal P.S. 208
Marlon Lowe, Principal M862