



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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April 30, 2021

Chancellor Meisha Porter
NYC Board of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chancellor Porter,

Yesterday, the members of Community Education Council District 3 (“CEC 3”) were made aware of the fact middle school admissions letters were mistakenly posted by the Department of Education (“DOE”) on the Myschools account of some fifth graders in District 3 and across the City of New York. Shortly after release, the DOE was able to remove these admissions letters from myschools accounts. As you can imagine, some families were left wondering if the letters were accurate while families who did not receive a letter were left wondering, why? To complicate matters, we understand that a few weeks ago the same mistake was made and a small number of families had access to their middle school admissions letters. Further compounding the issue is speculation that middle schools have had access to their new student lists for at least 3 weeks now.

In addition, yesterday’s distribution of the SHSAT results was fraught with its own problems. Many families were unable to access their student’s results well into the evening. In many instances, school guidance counselors were forced to access the DOE systems and then email each individual family their student’s results.

Since March 2020, many families in District 3 have lost confidence and faith in the DOE. The DOE has continually embarrassed itself with delayed school openings, lack of functional devices for all students who required them, renegeing on their promise to have multiple entry points for remote learners to return to school; communications with families through social media rather than directly with families, decisions regarding grades, attendance and school admissions criteria. CEC 3 is not here to rehash these missteps, but we outline them so that you are aware of the lack of trust many families have with City and DOE leadership and how continued failures will only lead to increasing parental frustration.

Yesterday’s actions were irresponsible at best and grossly incompetent at worst. Put simply, the DOE should be embarrassed and must take responsibility for their oversights. After more than a year of disjointed learning, the last thing our children need is the scenario that they now face. Some students know where they will be going to middle school and others don’t, some students know their SHSAT results and others don’t. To hope that parents and students won’t share their results with classmates is laughable and results in undue mental and emotional stress on the children that don’t know their placements or results. In a year in which many conversations have focused on equity for all, the DOE should explain how this is equitable for those involved.

We know that the middle school admissions team sent emails to elementary schools stating that the letters accurately stated a student’s middle school placement. So, there is only one way to rectify this problem. The DOE needs to stop sitting on information that parents desperately want and release all placements and results across the City. The failure to do so would be negligence on the part of the DOE.

CEC 3 hereby demands that the DOE immediately release all middle school admissions letters and SHSAT results to families and students across the City of New York and implement concrete measures to ensure that these problems never happen again. Unfortunately, we have little confidence that history won't repeat itself.

Sincerely,

CEC3

cc: Mayor Bill de Blasio
Executive Superintendent, Manhattan, Marisol Rosales
District 3 Superintendent Christine Loughlin
Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer
NYC Public Advocate Jumaane Williams
NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer
NYS Regents Member, 1st District, Nan Eileen Mead
Panel for Educational Policy Member, Michael Kraft
Panel for Educational Policy Member, Shannon Waite
City Councilmember Mark Treyger
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State Assembly Member Inez Dickens
State Assembly Member Richard N. Gottfried
State Assembly Member Robert J. Rodriguez
State Senator John Liu, Chair, Subcommittee on NYC Education
State Senator Shelley Mayer, Chair, Committee on Education
State Senator Brian Benjamin
State Senator Brad Hoylman
State Senator Robert Jackson
State Senator Jose M. Serrano
U.S. Congressman Adriano Espaillat
U.S. Congressman Jerrold L. Nadler
United Federation of Teachers President Michel Mulgrew
Community Board 7 Chair Steven Brown
Community Board 10 Chair Cicely Harris