



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 3

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CEC3 High School Admissions Committee Meeting Minutes

March 7, 2019, 6:30 p.m.
PS/IS 76 Library
220 W. 121st Street

- ❖ *Attendance: Jean Moreland, CEC3 High School Admissions Committee Co-Chair, Deirdre Garrett-Scott, CEC3 High School Admissions Committee Co-Chair, Sharmilee Ramudit, CEC3 Member, and 8 community members*

1. Updates:

1. Enrollment says offers will go out mid-March. March 18 would be the latest. Over 70% of families created a parent account in the new online system.
2. The Christa McAuliffe PTO lawsuit sought an injunction against the mayor's expansion of the Discovery program. The judge ruled on Feb 25 against the injunction meaning the city can go ahead with its algorithms and formulating offers. This means the number of offers coming from the Discovery program for Specialized High Schools will be about double last year's numbers (528 vs 253).
3. State Bill S1415: A new senate bill has been forwarded by Senator Kevin Parker to the NYC Education senate committee representing the mayor's proposal—updating the dates, but otherwise the same.
4. Chris and Jerome gave a synopsis of their meeting with State Senator Robert Jackson. He is very focused on the fair funding of schools. He is not necessarily behind getting rid of the SHSAT.
5. The School Construction Authority has new high school seats in Queens in their 5-year plan. Queens is the only borough where the number of students in the borough is much more than the current seat capacity. Academy for American Studies in Long Island City (2021)—adding approximately 900 seats. Benjamin Cardozo in Bayside (2022)—adding approximately 600 seats. These are both Queens priority. A new high school of 3000 seats will be built at the old Sports Authority location on Northern Blvd. (2023 completion) We don't know any details about this one yet. Obviously, it would not be easy to get to from District 3, even if it will be a Citywide high school, but it may open up seats at other schools where the Queens kids would otherwise go.
6. Jean met with the parent coordinator at Franck McCourt (as did Chris and Jerome in a separate meeting), still hoping to meet with the principal at a later date. They have seen a rise in applications this year, 1900 vs 1400 last year. The CUNY college now program begins in 11th grade, and students can take classes at any CUNY campus that is convenient for them. In addition, they have professors that come to Frank McCourt to teach (BMCC professor teaching a psychology class there this semester). They do not have space to grow right now because of the configuration of their space, the building is shared with 3 other schools.
7. Jean met with the principal at Manhattan Hunter Science High School. The school is very diverse and produces great results, comparable to other high-performing, less-integrated schools.

- He is very mindful of serving the public school population. This year the school will be offering 69% of seats to students at poverty level. Students take their entire senior year at Hunter and graduate with college experience and credits under their belt. About 5000 students list them on their application each year, but only about 2000 fill out the online form required by the school (basic info and short essay). Only those 2000 are really considered for admission. He noted that he does not get an overwhelming number of applicants from D3, although it is up from previous years. One reason may be that he does not do tours. They have a virtual tour online. He thought that tours left out a lot of parents who were not able to take off work, travel with their kids to the tours, and he feels that his stats and the virtual tour tells families what they need to know. He was very frank in stating that he believes the DOE keeps underperforming schools open too long. Expansion of the school would depend on Hunter/CUNY wanting to expand as they not only provide the free classes, but have to spend money on the administration of the program. He believes he could fill the entire MLK building, but if he were to design an expansion plan, he believes it would be better to have 1 or 2 new schools with a similar model, but perhaps a different focus (i.e. Hunter Humanities High School etc.).
8. Christa McAuliffe lawsuit against DOE changes to Discovery program: Request for court to make a decision about the injunction by February 25 so that it does not significantly delay admissions offer timeline.
 9. Letter to elected officials: smaller committee working group has been going over the data and letter that Sharon Just compiled. All the data updates are not available yet today. This data and detailed analysis would be backup to the “asks” we want to make of elected officials. They need more of a summary document. Chris Giordano created a summary letter, and Jean a talking points document of the main points (new high-quality high school seats needed). After discussion, it’s doubtful that CEC would sign off on the language of the letter. It would most likely need to be signed off by parents. There was not consensus in the group of the tone of the letter. Although all parents seem to feel strongly about the need for additional seats, there is not agreement on the mayor’s proposal.
2. Data: Reviewed data from enrollment showing the top 5 high schools listed on applications for each D3 middle school last year. After offers go out, we will get this year’s numbers to compare.
 1. Manhattan Hunter Science did not show up that often, despite its quality. Some parents commented that its due to not offering tours. A few things suggested that guidance counselors needed to work with parents more: West Prep had Eleanor Roosevelt as the number one school appearing on its applications, despite it being a District 2 priority school.
 2. There was a discussion about schools “batching” their rankings. For example, Columbia Secondary may consider 50 students whose stats are basically the same as Rank #1. How does this work? Jean said she’d double check with enrollment. Each student is assigned a random number as part of the process. So if a school says 50 students are equally “number 1”, then the randomly assigned number would decide the ranking and the student ranked number one for that school would be the student among those 50 that had the lowest random number. The algorithm would still work the same to try to match students to their top choice as well.
3. CEC3 Resolution:
 1. The resolution drafted at the January 17 meeting was voted down (5-5 tie) at the January 23rd CEC3 calendar meeting. Members that voted no believed there were not enough voices represented across the district. Some parents also spoke to CEC members indicating that they were intimidated at the last meeting, and felt that their opinions were not given equal time.
 2. We discussed the idea of surveys at middle schools we have not heard from, meetings and listening sessions to get as many voices as possible. The consensus among CEC members in the room was that there was *not* consensus across the district on whether to support or criticize the mayor’s proposal. Any resolution before the CEC that says the proposal should not be passed, or implies that it be stopped, will probably not pass. There is a fear that integration efforts at these schools will come to a standstill.
 3. The consensus centers around the need for high quality seats, especially those offering AP or early college programs with STEAM curricula. There is also consensus that the current process, with the district priorities, puts D3 students at a disadvantage in the intense competition for the seats with those attributes.

4. The decision was to take any mention of support (or lack thereof) out of the resolution, shorten it, and focus on the need for seats, the district priorities and the convoluted process. Deirdre and Jean will meet with Sharmilee to work on changes and then work with individual CEC members so that the CEC can vote on the new resolution in April.
4. Next Steps:
 1. Jean and Deirdre to rework the resolution
 2. Committee working group will continue to schedule meeting with elected officials to push for D3 access to great seats.
 3. Need to start planning annual High School Admissions workshop, usually held the beginning of June.