



Community Education Council 24

Public School 71 Forest
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Community Education Council 24 (CEC24) – Meeting Minutes

Date: October 28, 2025 at Public School 68

Welcome to the October 28th Hybrid Calendar and Business Meeting

Roll Call: Matthew Crescio, Gina Liberta, Kate Barvels, Anna Karwowska, Manisha Jain, Elizabeth Fortunato, Brian Augustine, Julissa Mc Hugh-excused, Aliya Bonar

Online: 47 guests

Attendees: Superintendent Anthony Rivera, Jose Jimenez, Rachell Lewis, John Harrington, UFT Representative, Pamela Okoli from Nutrition and her staff, Principal Katherine Rodriguez from PS 16, Principal Linda O’Shaughnessy from PS 88, Donna Murphy, from FACE, Adrienne Williams, Charlie Varuska representative from Council member Bob Holden, Mercedes Jennings, representative from Senator Giannaris’ office, Theresa Cottone, representative from Council member Julie Won’s office; Principal Indiana Soto from Public School 71, John Harrington, UFT Representative, Artie Gnecco, Principal from Mosaic Pre-K schools, Principal Dalipi Kalosh from Public School 305, Z. Rahman

Parent Vacancy:

The Council announced that the interview process for filling current vacancies on CEC24 will be conducted during the November 18th CEC24 meeting.

Interested individuals are encouraged to express their interest in serving on the Council.

Matthew Crescio’s, CEC24 President September’s Report

Expansion of Summer and School-Year Programs

The Council discussed the expansion of the district and the transition to a new six-year contract for summer and school-year programs. Previously renewed annually, the new contract ensures long-term stability and funding for participating schools. District 24 (D24) now hosts the most summer programs in the state, including Summer Rising, which is fully funded under this contract.

Schools Receiving New Seats:

· PS 7, PS 12, PS 13, PS 16, PS/IS 49, PS 58, IS 73, IS 77, PS 81, PS 89, IS 93, PS 102, PS/IS 119, IS 125, PS 153, PS/IS 128, PS 199, PS 229, PS 239 and PS 343

Funding and Contract Details:

These programs are fully funded for six years. This marks the highest number of contracts awarded across all New York City school districts. CEC24 advocated strongly for this expansion and is proud to see the results.

- o Collaboration with Superintendent Rivera and James Leahy identified 4–5 potential expansion sites.
 - o Schools such as PS/IS 113 and others exceed 120%+ capacity.
 - o Construction limited in Corona due to lack of land availability.

· Community Acknowledgment:

o Recognition to Principal Brownstein (PS 290) and Parent Coordinator Joann Guevara Lawson for their Hispanic Heritage Festival. The dance club from IS 93 was wonderful. Thank you for the community engagement and food contribution to CEC24 member Elizabeth Fortunato, PTA and staff.

III. Food Insecurity & Community Resource Initiative

Presented by Gina Liberta, CEC24 1st Vice President · Launch of a District 24 Food Resource Hub:

- o Compiles a Google Form database of local food pantries, discount food apps, and community resources.

- o Example programs: “Feed a Family of Ten for \$20” (Walmart) and food-sharing apps.
- o Purpose: Address rising food insecurity (currently impacting 1 in 2 Americans).
- o Team: Elizabeth Fortunato, Aliya Bonar and Gina Liberta

IV. Resolution 186: Support for Extending “Hold Harmless” Funding

Sponsored by: CEC24 President Matthew Crescio, Co-Sponsored by: Kate Barvels, Gina Liberta and Manisha Jain

CEC 24 Purpose: To urge the DOE and City of New York to continue “Hold Harmless” funding through 2025–2026.

- Vote Outcome: Resolution passed unanimously.

Guest Presentation

Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS)

Presenter: Pamela Okoli, Supervisor for District 24

Meal Overview:

- o Free breakfast, lunch, and after-school snacks for all NYC public school students.
- o Menus standardized citywide (2,025 menus; 4,770 recipes; 950,000 meals daily).

Programs:

- o Meatless Mondays and Plant-Based (Vegetarian) Options.
 - o Breakfast after the Bell for late-arriving students.
 - o Locally sourced produce from NYC-area farms.

Waste Reduction:

- o Introduction of “Share Tables” for unopened items.
- o Food Donation Programs available through principal request.

· **Nutritional Standards:**

- o Over 60 ingredients prohibited (e.g., artificial sweeteners, deep-fried foods).
- o Compliance with USDA & NYC Health Department guidelines.

· **Parental Feedback:**

- o Emphasis on communication with school food managers for allergy accommodations and dietary concerns.
- o Encouragement for parents to complete DOE nutrition surveys.

Superintendent Anthony Rivera's Report

District Priorities:

1. Student Safety and Emotional Well-being
2. High-Quality Core Instruction (focus on mathematics)
3. College and Career Readiness
4. Inclusive School Environments
5. Foundational Literacy (Chancellor's 2035 "Thriving Readers" Goal)

Key Updates:

- District 24 Enrollment Decline:
 - o Down from 34,400 to 32,300 students in one year.
 - o 34 schools currently below projected enrollment → facing budget challenges.
 - o If "Hold Harmless" funding is not extended, schools risk program and staff cuts.

· **Instructional Focus:**

- o Promotion of "What I Need (WIN)" periods for individualized instruction.
- o Encouragement for schools to adopt DOE-approved literacy programs.

· **Teacher Development:**

- o 276 new teachers hired in 2025; upcoming Tenure Celebration Ceremony planned

in collaboration with the UFT.

· **Community Engagement:**

- o Upcoming Middle School Fair – November 10, 2025 at IS 61.
- o Launch of Principal Advisory Council to improve communication and leadership collaboration.

New School Announcement

- Introduction of PS/Q340, a new elementary school in Woodside, within the PS 12 and PS 229 zones.
 - Scheduled to open September 2026 with 451 seats (3 kindergarten sections, possible Pre-K).

· **Interim Acting Principal Appointed:**

- o Suzanne Sheerin, Assistant Principal of PS 102, with 20 years in DOE and a strong background in community-based education.
- o Ms. Suzanne Sheerin emphasized creating a safe, nurturing, and collaborative environment for students and families.

Public Discussion

- Clarifications on Title I vs. Non-Title I funding.
- Impact of enrollment decline on staffing and enrichment programs.
- Requests for food donation flexibility during the temporary SNAP funding suspension.
- Affirmations from DOE that no existing mandated services will be cut due to compliance with the Class Size Reduction Law.

- Next meeting is scheduled for November 18, 2025 at Public School 71 with continued discussion on transportation, funding, and school construction updates.

Business Meeting:

Danielle Schaaff from School Construction Authority will be present

District 24 Middle School Fair will be on Monday, November 10th at Intermediate School 61

Schedule School Liaison Visitations for members

Members joined different committees, such as Bylaws, Social Media, Safety, Awards, Special Committees, and School Construction, and will update at CEC meetings

Meeting Adjourned. Janet Kregler, CEC24 Administrative Assistant