



Community Education Council for District 4
 240 E 109 Street, Room 104, New York, NY 10029



Phone: 212-360- 4777 Email: cec4@schools.nyc.gov

President

Dr. Kaliris Salas-Ramirez– IEP

1st Vice President

Sophie Oulai

2nd Vice President

Lacey Jordan– D75 Rep– IEP

Recording Secretary

April Autry

Treasurer

Johanna Domínguez– IEP

Council Members:

Elizabeth Soto-Cardona
 Adriana Tlacomulco– IEP
 Ivy Soto– IEP

District 4 Superintendent:

Dr. Kristy De La Cruz

Date: Wednesday, August 13th, 2025

Meeting Start Time: 6:09 pm

Attendees: 68

Calendar Meeting Minutes

August 13th, 2025

- **D4 CEC President:** (6:09 pm - 6:12 pm)

She welcomed everyone for joining the meeting.

Informed that this is a public meeting, and we must adhere to FERPA laws, which protect the identity of our students.

1. Roll call and call to order by Farah Khan- (6:12 pm – 6:13 pm)

Members Present: Dr. Kaliris Salas-Ramirez, Sophie Oulai, Johanna Dominguez, Elizabeth Soto-Cardona, and Adriana Tlacomulco (Zoom).

Members Absent: Lacey Jordan, April Autry and Ivy Soto.

2. Programming and why restorative justice practices are important in our schools- Presentation- Executive Director- Founder of The CircleKeepers- Martin Urbach:
 (6:14 pm – 6:31 pm)

He informed that he is restorative justice coordinator in two different schools in New York City, in Manhattan, and Brooklyn.

He talked about:

- Restoration justice youth participatory action research abolition activism.
- Our mission statement
- Achievements to date
- Restorative justice Principles
- Pillar 2: Accountability
- Pillar 3: Restoration

- Anti oppressive restorative justice
- RJ youth led trainings
- The problem: Disproportionate suspensions in NYC
- Broader academic & life consequences
- Our Solution: Youth-led restorative justice
- Cell phone and smartwatch policy
- Moving forward in restorative justice ways

- **D4 CEC President:** (6:32 pm – 6:34 pm)

She said that recently, the Manhattan Institute released a report suggesting that restorative justice was not working in our schools. She asked if the only metric that was presented was the number of suspensions, what other things should we be looking for to understand the efficacy of the program, and how to better effectively implement in our schools?

- **Martin Urbach:** (6:34 pm – 6:38 pm)

He replied that there are 3 different metrics. Do our students get suspended? When you offer them to come and do some work, what are young people's feelings of safety in their buildings? Manhattan Institute is referencing a study, where they say that they had trained all these young people and teachers in restorative justice practices, they train, 290 people in Tier 1. Restorative justice practices, 290 people in community building restorative justice circles, in conflict resolution circles. They have tools, training, support and funding to be able to build a restorative justice world in our school where safety, peace, justice, and belonging are not just for some, they are for all?

- **Public question:** (6:38 pm – 6:39 pm)

How do you adapt the circles for different age groups and cultures?

- **Martin Urbach:** (6:39 pm – 6:51 pm)

He said every community member knows their community best. New York City public school teachers, they are smart, brilliant and resourceful people on the planet. They create materials and give them out, go through trainings. They sometimes do circles in Spanish.

- **D4 CEC President:** (6:52 pm – 6:54 pm)

She informed that we had 3 resolutions that we were going to discuss tonight but unfortunately, we do not have quorum, and we won't be able to vote on them.

3. Report of District 4 Superintendent- Dr. Kristy De La Cruz: (6:55 pm – 7:05 pm)

She thanked everyone for joining the meeting.

She discussed:

- District 4 Community Norms
- New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) Mission
- District 4 East Harlem mission

- District priorities
- Important updates- ELA & Maths Gains
- Attendance growth
- Proposed cellphone policies
- Swimming classes for all D4
- First day of school: Thursday September 4th, 2025
- Meeting the moment (NYCPS) Stands against hate.
- Upcoming District Four Event

She mentioned that if you cannot get ahold of someone, whether you are from D4 or another district, please contact her and D4 team, they are committed to connecting you to the right resource, and regardless of whether it is education, food, or anything else. D4 office is always supervised by either her, Dr. Lisa Reiter, Deputy Superintendent or Lennys Patino, Family Support Coordinator. The district office is only closed on Labor Day.

She thanked everyone for being here and she spoke about wellness. She emphasized to continue to take care of yourselves and said that she is very excited about the upcoming school year.

- **CEC4 Treasurer:** (7:05 pm – 7:06 pm)

She asked about the school new fund policy allocations and which way is going to be distributed? And the Cellphone policy.

- **Dr. Kristy:** (7:06 pm – 7:17 pm)

She informed that all district 4 schools have provided the Cellphone policy to her. Most of the D4 schools has a cellphone policy, there is a school allocation memorandum. This is public knowledge; it is based on the number of students. No family should be required to pay for anything, if your school is asking you to pay, let the district office know.

All 23 schools have submitted to her their cell phone policy, they have reviewed them; and have provided feedback in alignment with the proposed template. It is going to look different per school, depending on the number of students.

For cell phones, some schools have a yonder pouch, every school has a different system based on their community, The cell phone policy should be included in the parent handbook and in the student handbook. There are exceptions that will be explained in each cell phone policy. For example, sometimes we have students due to health reasons, maybe it is their glucose monitor, might need a certain device, that would be an exception, and there is a system for the exceptions. It will be added it to district 4 website, the FAQs and the resources, about the cell phone policies, because this is in alignment to the Chancellor's regulation.

4. Report of D4 CEC President –Dr. Kaliris Salas-Ramirez: (7:18 pm – 7:29 pm)

She introduced herself and spoke about the cellphone policy in NYCPS and talked about bussing.

She informed that she was at the Panel for Educational Policy meeting, a week and a half ago, where the cell phone policy was discussed and voted on. There is a need to provide some form of guardrails for kids to understand the appropriate use of cell phones. A lot of our students take public transportation, things happen there, and sometimes they need to call home for an emergency. The chancellor made a commitment to the folks in the audience, panel members that voted no on the policy as well and our superintendent is assuring us tonight, that these conversations are being had with our school leaders, so that we have a policy that supports all our students, remaining distraction-free, but still using the policy to keep children safe.

It is important for us within our SLTs as parent leaders to engage in meaningful conversations. We currently have children being kidnapped by ICE; we have families that are being separated.

She wanted our community to know that we have an opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations about how to best meet the needs of our students and continue to help them feel safe.

She added that on August 26th, there will be an engagement session with the United Federation of Teachers, where they want to talk about busing contracts, there is a legislation in Albany to improve these contracts, but we must change that legislation so that we have the funding to be able to pay our bus drivers, and that they have better contracts so that they want to continue to drive our children to school.

Some children do not participate in after school because they do not have busing, it is important, for our children with disabilities that have IEPs that mandate that transportation.

She informed that the next PEP meeting will be on August 27th, 2025, at Clara Barton.

On August 27th, there is another virtual hearing, on the Code of Conduct and the district-wide safety plan.

She thanked CEC4 council members for participating in Summer Rising celebrations and participating in the NYPD's National Night Out.

She congratulated the support of our Family Connectors, as well as our New York City Reads Ambassadors.

She said she is collaborating with some of our other CEC presidents, as many of you probably have heard about an initiative from Mayor Eric Adams called After School for All, where 5,000 after-school seats were provided in different districts across the city. Unfortunately, in Manhattan only two sites were chosen, and those two sites are two charter schools. Our public schools did not receive any funding or any support for this initiative. Next week, our Comptroller, Brad Lander, will probably releasing a policy report on this. Our borough is not the only one affected, Queens and Brooklyn also have some concerns.

- **Dr. Kristy:** (7:29 pm – 7:36 pm)

She spoke about NYC reads that they have been focusing a lot on New York City Reads. When talking about AI, she said we need to discuss as a community and engage as a community.

She informed the only thing they have offered is a pilot called Project Cafe, and that is going to be voluntary with teachers, new teachers, to see if they want to have more agency over their own learning.

- **D4 CEC President:** (7:36 pm – 7:49 pm)

She asked all the CEC4 council members to introduce themselves.

After the council members introduction, she informed everyone that as we do not have quorum so we cannot conduct official business.

- **Calendar meeting adjourned:** 7:49 pm

Business Meeting Minutes

August 13th, 2025

Date: Wednesday, August 13th, 2025

Meeting Start Time: 7:57 pm

Attendees: 30

1. Roll call and call to order by Farah Khan 7:57 pm

Members Present: Dr. Kaliris Salas-Ramirez, Sophie Oulai, Johanna Dominguez, Elizabeth Soto-Cardona, and Adriana Tlacomulco (Zoom).

Members Absent: Lacey Jordan, April Autry and Ivy Soto.

2. D4 CEC President: (8:10 pm)

She said that she would love to host a meet and greet with parent leaders across the district, residence council, family connectors, New York City ambassadors, and CECs so that we can continue to build parent leadership. As it is important for us to continue to build community and have people come to our meetings.

She informed that there are two CEC4 vacant seats and two borough president appointees' seats, if any parent in the school community that can be involved in the CEC4 and can make the time commitment for the community can apply.

Then she asked the CEC4 council members that if they can pick 5 schools, even though they won't have all 5 schools, but at least ranked choice 5 as if anybody else chooses the same 5, or 3, or 2 that they want, that way, we will have lots of options and preferences.

She informed that CEC4 will table on Friday August 15th, at the Youth Fair.

3. Business meeting adjourned: 8:10 pm

Prepared & submitted by:
Farah Khan
Administrative Assistant

Next D4 CEC Calendar and Business Meeting will be on September 10th, 2025.