



**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](mailto:cec4@schools.nyc.gov)

**President**

Elizabeth Soto-Cardona – MBPA

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President**

Mario Medina

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**

Lacey Jordan

**Recording Secretary**

Rosa Nagovich – MBPA

**Treasurer**

Johanna Dominguez

**Council Members:**

Evelis Galarza-Serrano  
 Gloria Flaherty  
 Jasmin Benitez  
 Rafael Lima – D75 Rep  
 Rosa G. Diaz – IEP

**District 4 Superintendent**

Dr. Kristy De La Cruz

**High School Student Representatives**

Genesis Gay  
 Leslie Galan

**Date:** Wednesday, March 12th, 2025

**Meeting Start Time:** 6:06 pm

**Introduction of Spanish interpreters:** 6:06 pm

**Attendees:** 99

**Calendar Meeting**

**March 12th, 2025**

**Minutes**

**1. Roll call and call to order by Farah Khan- (6:07 pm – 6:08 pm)**

**Members Present:** Elizabeth Soto-Cardona, Mario Medina, Lacey Jordan (Zoom), Rosa Nagovich (Zoom), Johanna Dominguez, Gloria Flaherty and Jasmin Benitez.

**Member Absent:** Evelis Galarza-Serrano (Unexcused), Rafael Lima (Excused) and Rosa Diaz (Unexcused)

**• D4 CEC President: 6:08 pm**

She introduced herself and thanked everyone for joining the meeting. Thanked Spanish interpreters.

She informed everyone that we do not have quorum for today's meeting, so it will be an informational meeting.

**2. Who We Are: Overview of INCLUDEnyc- Rosanna Garcia: (6:08 pm – 6:27 pm)**

Ms. Garcia introduced herself as family educator for includeNyc. She said that she worked as a preschool teacher for over 8 years from birth to 5 years old. Now she is a family educator at includeNyc, it is an early childhood and school age Family Engagement Center for all the boroughs in New York City, a nonprofit to support families and work with children with disabilities. It was founded in 1983 by 3 mothers that had children with disabilities, who were trying to find a safe space to gather information, exchange of resources, and so on and so forth in the community and still to this day includeNyc continues to be a place that has people with disabilities, parents or family members with disabilities, and they have people very passionate to educate families on their rights and on different topics and transition processes. IncludeNyc offer one to one support about special education disability questions or evaluation processes. Many of the calls that they get are on early intervention and preschool. They do transition right from a young child trying to go to the

high school or to college, parents struggling to compliance with their children's schools. They have a helpline, Monday through Friday. They will listen to what your situation is and just do a quick intake form just with name, last name email if you feel comfortable with your mail, so that the family educators can look up your school district.

They offer different workshops that help in understanding a child's IP.

Project possibility offers one-to-one counseling for helping young adults achieve a higher education, employment and other goals.

Phone number for the English. The 212-67-7460, and the 212-677-7 is 212-677-4668 is for Spanish.

They also have special education, one on one training, 11 am to 3 pm. Parents training is a profession that can get a certification, stating that they can attend IP meetings and support families that are going into IP meetings emotionally.

- **Parent:** (6:27 pm – 6:28 pm)

She questioned that do they deal with parents that have the Nixon letter. Her son is technically a District 4 student, but he goes to school in New Rochelle. She asked for their contact number.

- **Rosanna Garcia:** (6:28 pm – 6:29 pm)

She provided the help line number- (212) 677- 4660 | (212) 677- 4668.

- 3. Report of District 4 CEC President- Elizabeth Soto- Cardona:** (6:30 pm – 6:31 pm)

She welcomed everyone to the Community Education Council for the month of March meeting. She read the ground rules for the meeting and the meeting agenda. She thanked Ms. Rosanna Garcia for joining the meeting and her overview of IncludeNYC.

She mentioned that the next item on the agenda was a resolution but unfortunately, we have not met quorum this month, so that will be tabled to the month of April.

- 4. Report of District 4 Superintendent- Dr. Kristy De La Cruz:** (6:31 pm – 6:58 pm)

She appreciated everyone for joining the meeting, thanked the Spanish interpreter for being here as well. She informed that PS. 155 is in the middle of accessibility project. This is year one of that renovation process, to ensure that we have a fully accessible building which includes elevators and ramps. It is inclusive to all abilities in the community.

She said she thought there was no other way to tie black history month into women's history month by honoring Dr. Hazel Dukes, a person who was a former president of the NAACP, during the pandemic, through that partnership she gave the East Harlem Community about a thousand devices, that had no strings attached, we had schools that need devices for students and families.

Dr. Kristy shared a video "For voting rights, fair housing and access. A student from Patrick Henry Prep, spoke about the passing of Dr. Hazel Dukes. Dr. Dukes was a force leading the New York State NAACP. For nearly 50 years she dedicated her life to the pursuit of justice and fought tirelessly for voting rights, fair housing and access to quality education issues that directly affect our lives and futures. She believed that every child, regardless of their background, deserves access to the best resources and opportunities. Dr. Duke's life was a testament to the fact that we cannot be passive in the face of injustice. We must be active participants in creating more equitable society.

Dr. Kristy said tomorrow we are going to do a tribute to Dr. Hazel Dukes at our "Civics for all" community Forum.

She spoke about the statistics and information about women's rights. Women were able to have the right to vote, white women were able to vote in 1920, and in 1965 women of color were

allowed to vote. Legal protection against domestic abuse in 1994 and in 1988 when a woman could buy a business without a man's signature.

She said she always want everyone to feel that they can speak their truth, sometimes someone else's truth can cause us discomfort, but we still want people to feel safe and brave enough to speak their truth. That is how we get better and that is also part of the vulnerability. The other thing that is very important is accepting and expecting non-closure. We are not going to solve everything today, most of our work is not finished but we are going to continue to work on it, and if we do not have the answer, we will find the answer or try to advocate to the best of our ability.

**She discussed:**

- District 4 Community Norms
  - New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) Mission
  - District 4 Mission
  - District Priorities
  - Attendance Update
  - Office of Enrollment
  - Meeting the Moment (NYCPS) Stands Against Hate.
  - Supporting our Multilingual Families
  - Key Reminders
  - Summer Rising
  - Civics for All Community Forum
  - Upcoming District Four Events
- 
- **CEC4 Treasurer-** (6:58 pm – 6:59 pm)  
She asked that last year we had 5 summer rising sites, and now we have 7 sites. Does the Schools open with the same budget, or the budget is increased for the summer rising.
  - **Dr. Kristy De La Cruz:** (6:59 pm – 7:03 pm)  
She answered that it is the figure that is increased to support the schools. It does not come out of it, once we have allocated, we can only open so many schools. It is based-on children. They have seats and numbers, and they use the CBO's that are attached to the schools.
  - **CEC4 Treasurer-** (7:04 pm)  
If the kids are moving to 9th grade, can they be able to enjoy summer rising even. The child will not be in the school next year.
  - **Dr. Kristy De La Cruz:** (7:05 – 7:06 pm)  
She replied that the 8th graders are the part of summer rising. And we do have high school summer rising too from kindergarten all the way through Seniors.
  - **CEC4 Council Member:** (7:07 pm)  
She asked what type of ID is required for the young children for summer rising and where to get it from.
  - **Dr. Kristy De La Cruz:** (7:05 – 7:06 pm)  
She replied that the ID can be the birth certificate or the passport.
  - **CEC4 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President:** (7:07 pm – 7:07 pm)  
She said that we can remind parents that not all summer rising programs are the same every year, they can choose the best thing that is available on the website.

- **Dr. Kristy De La Cruz:** (7:07 – 7:08 pm)  
She said it is really great point and thanked her for sharing.
  
- **David Giordano:** (7:08 – 7:09 pm)  
He advised about the summer SYEP, the documentation is very important and checking the emails every day, and even twice a day is important, because if you miss it, they will put you back in the lottery, and you will miss that opportunity. So, everybody must have your kids check their emails, or you check for them. The documentation is the other thing, kids need working papers if they are under 18, that is one of the things that will prevent them from working. So, we must make sure that they get their working papers.
  
- **Parent:** (7:09 – 7:09 pm)  
Parent asked that what we are doing to better fund our district 4 schools.
  
- **Dr. Kristy De La Cruz:** (7:10 – 7:15 pm)  
She said there are many different levels of where we try to advocate for more funding and a lot of that does come from every aspect, staff school leaders and parents. Every budget is based on the number of children in a school. We have a whole plan about enrollment and recruitment, and how we can increase that number. There is a school leadership team to view the additional funding per child. We have the appeal process, and have increased the number of participatory budgets, we have people from both the CEC, Union, United Federation of Teachers, and union for the Council of Supervisors, who have also been lobbying, which means they go up to Albany to say we deserve to have full funding. Panel for Education Policy, that is another group of parent leaders who have a lot of say in how schools are funded. As soon as we hear that we are losing money or a grant, we must continue to reach out, communicate and leverage our elected officials which not only our CEC but our students and families have been advocating for what they deserve as well.
  
- She informed that we just received another big grant around technology and for teachers' college. So, we are constantly applying for grants to also support funding at the district level. But our budget is very tiny. Our budget is around \$25,000 for the entire year. The schools have much bigger budget, schools should have more money than the district office, but we do that to support. We also leveraged our police department; they have supported us with some of our sports, the jets program, the football. Asphalt Green has given us a grant for all our Asphalt Green swimming, the amount of money that they are investing in East Harlem at no cost for our schools is profound. These are some of the ways, how we increase the funding.
  
- **CEC4 1st Vice President:**(7:16 pm – 7:17 pm)  
He apprised that the Citywide Wellness Advisory Board, the New York City public schools launched their wellness policy, their new Wellness policy is empowering strong and healthy students. Can be checked at our CEC4 website. We have a link to that policy. It starts with every child needs at least 45 minutes of physical education a week minimum of 45 minutes, for more information about the policy, you can go to our website at [cecd4.org](http://cecd4.org).
  
- **Motion to adjourn the Calendar meeting by Gloria Flaherty seconded by Jasmin Benitez** (7:18 pm)

5. **Calendar meeting adjourned:** 7:18 pm

# Business Meeting

March 12th, 2025

## Minutes

**Date:** Wednesday, March 12th, 2025

**Meeting Start Time:** 7:31 pm

### **1. Roll call and call to order by Farah Khan 7:31pm**

**Members Present:** Elizabeth Soto-Cardona, Mario Medina, Lacey Jordan (Zoom), Rosa Nagovich (Zoom), Johanna Dominguez, Gloria Flaherty and Jasmin Benitez.

**Member Absent:** Evelis Galarza-Serrano (Unexcused), Rafael Lima (Excused) and Rosa Diaz (Unexcused)

**Attendees:** 45

### **2. D4 CEC President: (7:32 pm – 7:36 pm)**

She thanked everyone for joining and informed as we do not have quorum, we will not be able to hold our business meeting.

She mentioned last month we had 2 resolutions not all the members were clear about. She stated that it is important resolution to support our community and our district, especially during these very difficult times. Not everyone was on the same page with that, but she thinks that a lot of us abstain because they were unclear, and she wants to provide that opportunity to have that discussion and even if the outcome is the same. She wants to have a better system for which we will discuss resolutions and address amendments in the future, with an open mind, this was the reason as to why she wanted to revisit it so that we can have a system in place for future resolutions. Knowing that resolutions are important, they are our power and our voice, and we need to practice that accordingly.

She notified that we would have to table the treasury report, old and new business, meeting minutes and future planning.

- **CEC4 Treasurer-** (7:36 pm – 7:37 pm)  
She requested the council members to be in person for the next meeting. As the deadline to submit purchase orders is April 11th. So, in our next meeting on April 9th, we need to be here in person, to approve to spend the remaining amount. If we do not have the quorum that day, Friday, April 11th is the last day to create purchase orders. After that date we cannot create purchase orders. So at least for the next meeting, that order needs to be created with the ideas that we want to spend the \$5,521,
- **Motion to adjourn the business meeting by Gloria Flaherty seconded by Jasmin Benitez.** 7:37 pm

### **3. Business meeting adjourned: 7:37 pm**

**Prepared & submitted by:**  
**Farah Khan**  
**Administrative Assistant**

*Next D4 CEC Calendar and Business Annual Meeting will be on April 9th, 2025.*