



Community Education Council for District 4
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Date: September 9th, 2026

Sponsors: Dr. Kaliris Salas-Ramirez, Elizabeth Soto-Cardona, Lacey Jordan, Lawanda Joyner, Vandana Bonilla, and Tia Jackson.

Resolution Calling for the Establishment of Youth Education Councils for Every Community Education Council and Creating a District 4 Youth Education Council

WHEREAS, students are the people most directly affected by the policies, budgets, curricula, programs, school closures, co-locations, safety practices, disciplinary systems, technology initiatives, and other decisions made by New York City Public Schools (“NYCPS”); and

WHEREAS, meaningful student participation improves educational policymaking by grounding decisions in students’ lived experiences and providing information that may not otherwise reach adult decision-makers; and

WHEREAS, New York City’s system of mayoral control centralizes substantial authority over public education in the Mayor, Chancellor, and Panel for Educational Policy (“PEP”), while providing students with little formal decision-making power; and

WHEREAS, New York Education Law §2590-c provides that each Community District Education Council (“CEC”) shall include two non-voting student members who must be high-school seniors residing in the district and must be selected from elected student leadership; and

WHEREAS, these eligibility restrictions exclude students in grades nine through eleven, as well as students who demonstrate interest, insight, advocacy, or leadership outside of elected student-government positions; and

WHEREAS, the restriction to high-school seniors limits age diversity and prevents CECs and superintendents (who ultimately make the decision on the student appointees) from developing sustained relationships with younger high-school students who could participate for multiple years and deepen their knowledge of education policy and community governance; and

WHEREAS, high-school seniors are frequently balancing graduation requirements, college and financial-aid applications, employment, caregiving responsibilities, and preparation for life after high school, making it difficult for many eligible seniors to undertake an additional year-long commitment; and

WHEREAS, restricting eligibility to students already serving in elected leadership positions may exclude multilingual learners, students with disabilities, students who work or care for family members, students experiencing housing instability, and other young people whose experiences are essential to equitable policymaking; and

WHEREAS, although the PEP includes two high-school student advisory members pursuant to its bylaws and Chancellor's Regulation D-200, those students are speaking members without voting privileges and represent only a small fraction of the hundreds of thousands of students affected by PEP decisions; and

WHEREAS, limiting students to non-voting advisory roles reinforces an inequitable structure in which adults retain decision-making authority while young people are expected to live with the consequences of those decisions; and

WHEREAS, a [2024 Chalkbeat investigation found that nearly all CECs](#) were then out of compliance with the state requirement to seat student members and identified restrictive eligibility rules, inadequate outreach, and unwelcoming adult-dominated spaces as barriers to student participation; and

WHEREAS, state laws governing democratically elected school boards in other jurisdictions demonstrate that students can exercise meaningful decision-making authority; for example, Maryland law grants student members of several county boards of education (Montgomery and Charles Counties) the right to cast binding votes on most matters before their boards, subject to limited exceptions involving personnel, disciplinary, collective-bargaining, and other legally sensitive matters, demonstrating that student voting power can be responsibly incorporated into democratic school-governance structures (see Maryland Education Code [§3-901, Montgomery County](#) and [§3-501, Charles County](#)); and

WHEREAS, Newark, New Jersey, whose nine-member Board of Education is elected by the community, has expanded youth participation by permitting Newark residents who are 16 or 17 years old to register and cast binding ballots in school-board elections, thereby giving young people direct power to help select the officials who decide school budgets, policies, programs, and priorities; and New Jersey law separately requires every school district serving grades nine

through twelve to include at least one non-voting student representative selected by the student body, demonstrating that youth can participate both electorally and directly within formal school-governance structures (see Newark Ordinance [File No. 23-1558, Newark Public Schools' student-voter announcement](#), and New Jersey Statutes Annotated §18A:12-1.3, enacted through [P.L. 2021, Chapter 446](#)); and

WHEREAS, inviting one or two students into a space designed and controlled entirely by adults can result in isolation or tokenization rather than meaningful participation, particularly when students lack a cohort of peers, preparation, institutional support, and a clear role in shaping the Council's work; and

WHEREAS, students possess knowledge of their school environments that adult policymakers cannot fully replicate, including knowledge of school climate, mental health needs, disciplinary practices, curriculum, accessibility, technology, transportation, extracurricular activities, school facilities, and relationships among students and staff; and

WHEREAS, a district Youth Education Council would broaden participation beyond the narrow eligibility requirements established for statutory student CEC membership and create a more diverse body of students across grades, schools, backgrounds, identities, learning needs, and leadership experiences; and

WHEREAS, participation in a Youth Education Council would help prepare young people to serve as future student CEC members, PEP advisory members, School Leadership Team members, student-government leaders, community advocates, and participants in local and citywide public policymaking; and

WHEREAS, meaningful youth participation also requires adults to understand how tokenization, power imbalances, and inaccessible meeting practices may prevent young people from speaking openly and exercising genuine influence; and

WHEREAS, NYCPS's Division of Family and Community Empowerment ("FACE") and Office of Safety and Youth Development possess relevant experience and responsibilities related to family engagement, adult/youth allyship, student leadership, school climate, and youth development and should collaborate in supporting this initiative; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that Community Education Council District 4 hereby supports the creation of a Youth Education Council affiliated with every Community Education Council in New York City; and be it

further

RESOLVED, that CEC4 shall work with the District 4 Superintendent, FACE, the Office of Safety and Youth Development, principals, students, families, and community-based organizations to establish a District 4 Youth Education Council; and be it further

RESOLVED, that each NYC public high school located within Community School District 4 shall be invited to designate one or two students in grades nine through twelve to participate in the District 4 Youth Education Council; and be it further

RESOLVED, that each participating principal shall select students through a transparent and inclusive process that is communicated to the entire student body and that provides interested students with a meaningful opportunity to be considered; and be it further

RESOLVED, that membership in elected student government or another formal student-leadership position shall not be required for participation in the Youth Education Council, and that interest in improving schools, engaging with peers, and representing student concerns shall be sufficient grounds for consideration; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the selection process should seek representation across grade levels and reflect the racial, cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, gender, disability, and academic diversity of District 4 students, including multilingual learners and students with Individualized Education Programs; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the District 4 Youth Education Council shall meet twice each month during the school year, with one monthly meeting occurring as part of the CEC4 calendar meeting, either remotely or in person, so that students may participate directly in Council discussions and provide input on matters before the Council; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the second monthly Youth Education Council meeting may be held remotely or hosted on a rotating basis at different District 4 schools so that students may learn about one another's school environments, identify shared and school-specific concerns, and develop relationships across school communities; and be it further

RESOLVED, that a standing "Youth Education Council Report" shall be included as a standing item on each CEC4 calendar meeting agenda and that Youth Education Council members shall have a designated opportunity to raise concerns, present recommendations, and respond to

matters under consideration by the Council if they so wish; and be it further

RESOLVED, that Youth Education Council members may conduct advisory votes on recommendations and proposed CEC actions and that the results of those advisory votes shall be reported to CEC4 and reflected in the Council's public record or meeting minutes; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Youth Education Council shall select the issues it wishes to examine and shall not be limited to topics chosen for it by adults; and be it further

RESOLVED, that during the May CEC4 calendar meeting, Youth Education Council members shall present at least one student-drafted and student-led resolution addressing a need or policy priority identified by students throughout the school year in their meetings, and that the resolution shall be formally placed on the CEC4 agenda for consideration and a vote; and be it further

RESOLVED, that CEC4 parent leaders and other adults assigned to work directly with the Youth Education Council shall complete at least 120 minutes of youth-ally training before or during the beginning of each Youth Education Council term; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this training shall be developed and delivered in collaboration with FACE and the Office of Safety and Youth Development and shall address youth–adult power sharing, adultism, culturally responsive engagement, disability inclusion, trauma-informed practices, accessible facilitation, prevention of tokenization, and methods for incorporating student recommendations into official decision-making; and be it further

RESOLVED, that NYCPS shall provide the staffing, interpretation, accessibility accommodations, technology, food, transportation support, meeting space, and other resources necessary to ensure that students can participate regardless of income, disability, language, caregiving responsibilities, or access to technology; and be it further

RESOLVED, that participation in the Youth Education Council shall not replace, reduce, or be used to excuse noncompliance with the statutory requirement to appoint two non-voting high-school seniors to each CEC; and be it further

RESOLVED, that CEC4 calls upon the Chancellor and NYCPS to establish and fund Youth Education Councils for all 32 Community Education Councils and on the 4 Citywide Education Councils and to create citywide guidance that preserves local flexibility while guaranteeing meaningful and equitable student participation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that CEC4 calls upon the New York State Legislature and Governor to amend Education Law §§2590-b and 2590-c so that student participation in New York City's education-governance bodies is not limited by grade level or elected-leadership status and so that students are granted meaningful voting power on decisions affecting their education; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution shall be transmitted to the Chancellor of New York City Public Schools, the Deputy Chancellor responsible for family and community engagement, FACE, the Panel for Educational Policy, all Community and Citywide Education Councils, the Mayor of the City of New York, the New York City Council Speaker and Education Committee Chair, and the relevant members and education committee chairs of the New York State Senate and Assembly.

D4 CEC Council members as follows:

Dr. Kaliris Salas-Ramirez, Sophie Oulai (Absent), Lacey Jordan, Lawanda Joyner, Vandana Bonilla, Elizabeth Soto-Cardona (Absent), Johanna Dominguez, Adriana Tlacomulco, Tia Jackson and Kiera Jerez Alston.

Motion by Vandana Bonilla seconded by Lawanda Joyner.

This Resolution was approved unanimously by the Council Members at D4 CEC Calendar Meeting held on September 9th, 2026.