



Community Education Council for District 4
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Sponsors: Dr. Kaliris Salas-Ramirez, Elizabeth Soto-Cardona, Lacey Jordan, Lawanda Joyner, Vandana Bonilla, and Tia Jackson

Community Education Council 4 East Harlem's Resolution calling for an End to the Curriculum and Screener Mandates and Invest in Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education (CRSE), Portrait of the New York State Graduate, Teacher Autonomy and Authentic Assessment

WHEREAS, Community Education Council District 4 (CEC4) represents the families and students of East Harlem's public elementary and middle schools and has a responsibility to advocate for educational policies that advance equity, rigorous teaching and learning, student well-being, educator expertise, and meaningful family and community participation; and

WHEREAS, District 4 serves predominantly Black and Latine students, multilingual learners, students with disabilities, students living in temporary housing, and students whose histories, languages, cultures, identities, and communities must be treated as intellectual and cultural assets in teaching and learning; and

Data from the state tests (2025-2026)

WHEREAS, the [New York State Education Department's 2026 preliminary assessment data](#) showed that statewide proficiency among students in grades 3rd to 8th was 48 percent in English Language Arts and 57 percent in mathematics; and

WHEREAS, in New York City, grades 3 - 8 ELA proficiency fell from 56.3 percent in 2025 to 50.3 percent in 2026 (a six-percentage-point decline that nearly erased the previous year's seven-point increase) while citywide math proficiency increased by only 0.1 percentage point, from 56.9 percent to 57 percent; and

WHEREAS, the declines were especially pronounced in the elementary grades, with third-grade ELA proficiency falling approximately 13.8 percentage points and fifth-grade ELA proficiency

falling approximately 13.1 percentage points; and

WHEREAS, the sharp increase in ELA proficiency in 2025 followed by the sharp decline in 2026 raises serious questions about the reliability, comparability, administration, and interpretation of standardized-test results, particularly because spring 2026 was the first year in which all students in grades 3 - 8 were required to take the ELA, mathematics, and science assessments by computer; and

WHEREAS, testing experts have stated that these unusual year-to-year fluctuations require scrutiny, and Schools Chancellor Kamar Samuels has acknowledged that the results deserve careful and rigorous analysis to ensure that the assessments accurately measure what students are learning; and

WHEREAS, state assessments represent only one limited measure of student learning and should not be used by themselves to evaluate students, educators, schools, districts, or curricula, nor should they be used to justify punitive interventions, school closures, co-locations, leadership changes, or further centralization of educational decisions; and

WHEREAS, the 2026 state ELA results differed substantially from NYC Public Schools' academic-screener data, which reportedly showed a 2.9-point improvement in literacy, while the state math results increased by only 0.1 point despite a reported 7.9-point improvement on the city's math screeners; and

WHEREAS, these contradictions may reflect differences in what the assessments measure, curriculum alignment, administration conditions, scoring, technology, student participation, or other factors and therefore require an independent analysis before additional curriculum or assessment mandates are imposed or whether they are used comparatively to the state exam results; and

Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education vs Mandated Curriculum

WHEREAS, NYC Reads requires elementary schools to use one of three centrally approved core ELA curricula (HMH *Into Reading*, Great Minds *Wit & Wisdom*, or EL Education) while NYC Solves similarly mandates centrally selected mathematics programs, reducing the authority of educators and school communities to choose, develop, and adapt instruction responsive to the students they serve or based on results of any assessments performed on students; and

WHEREAS, three years of NYC Reads implementation have not produced consistent evidence that imposing uniform curricula improves learning across schools, grades, student groups, or assessments, and the 2026 test results do not establish that NYC Reads caused the decline, just as the 2025 results did not establish that NYC Reads caused the prior increase; and

WHEREAS, the Universal Mosaic Curriculum, developed under the deBlasio administration by then chancellors Carranza and Ross-Porter championed through years of organizing by Black and Latine parents and education justice advocates (like CEJ and AQE), was intended to create a rigorous, culturally responsive and sustaining K–12 ELA and mathematics curriculum specifically for New York City students; and

WHEREAS, the Universal Mosaic Curriculum was intended to be developed collaboratively with educators, students, families, and community members and to reflect the histories, languages, knowledge, cultures, and experiences of New York City's diverse public-school communities; and

WHEREAS, approximately \$202 million in federal pandemic-relief funds had been designated for Mosaic and related academic recovery work, including the creation of a publicly developed, culturally responsive curriculum; and

WHEREAS, the Adams/Banks administration [shelved the Universal Mosaic Curriculum in 2022](#), abandoning the goal of a unified and systemwide commitment to culturally responsive and sustaining curriculum without a transparent public evaluation or meaningful engagement with the families, educators, students, and advocates who had fought for its creation; and

WHEREAS, the cancellation of Mosaic left NYC Public Schools with fragmented and piecemeal CRSE initiatives rather than embedding culturally responsive and sustaining education throughout the curriculum, instruction, professional learning, assessment, and culture of the entire school system; and

WHEREAS, culturally responsive and sustaining education connects rigorous academic learning to students' identities, languages, histories, communities, interests, and prior knowledge and recognizes what students bring to the classroom as intellectual and cultural capital rather than as deficits; and

WHEREAS, the [New York State CRSE Framework](#) calls for student-centered learning environments that affirm racial, cultural, and linguistic identities; elevate historically marginalized voices; support rigorous and independent learning; develop students' critical consciousness; and

prepare students to connect across lines of difference; and

WHEREAS, [NYC Public Schools' own CRSE policy](#) recognizes that culturally responsive education can improve student participation, attendance, grades, graduation rates, civic engagement, self-image, and critical-thinking skills; and

WHEREAS, CRSE does not mean lowering academic expectations or rejecting explicit, evidence-based instruction in foundational literacy and mathematics skills; rather, it gives students meaningful entry points into rigorous academic work and enables them to see themselves as readers, writers, mathematicians, scientists, historians, artists, problem solvers, and producers of knowledge; and

WHEREAS, the Education Justice Research and Organizing Collaborative (EJROC) at the NYU Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools examined HMH *Into Reading*, the NYC Reads curriculum mandated in most community school districts, as part of its [Lessons in \(In\)Equity study](#); and

WHEREAS, NYU Metro Center's community research team, composed of parents, students, and educators, rated the curricula it examined, including HMH *Into Reading*, as culturally destructive or culturally insufficient; and

WHEREAS, the report found superficial representations of diversity without meaningful cultural context, one-sided and ahistorical narratives, language and framing that demeaned or dehumanized Black, Indigenous, and other characters of color, and little guidance for teachers on engaging students' cultures, backgrounds, experiences, and prior knowledge; and

WHEREAS, HMH *Into Reading* is used in 22 of New York City's 32 community school districts and is therefore the most widely imposed NYC Reads curriculum, making the findings about its cultural responsiveness particularly consequential for Black, Latine, Asian, Indigenous, immigrant, multilingual, LGBTQ+, and disabled students; and

WHEREAS, a peer-reviewed 2022 study of the K–8 *Wit & Wisdom* ELA curriculum, [“Overwhelming Whiteness: A Critical Analysis of Race in a Scripted Reading Curriculum”](#), examined racial representation across its core and supplementary texts and analyzed its teacher-facing materials through critical-discourse and anti-racist frameworks; the researchers found that whiteness was centered at every grade level through text selection, thematic groupings, essential questions, and instructional framing, and identified ways the curriculum reproduced a whiteness-

centered master narrative instead of consistently affirming students' diverse cultures, identities, histories, and experiences; and

WHEREAS, a [2026 peer-reviewed study examining fourth- and fifth-grade Expeditionary Learning](#) literacy units identified significant concerns related to cultural responsiveness, including insufficient historical knowledge and social-studies skills, limited relevance to children's lives and social worlds, and implicit ideological messages concerning social change and justice; and the participating educators cautioned that adding content to a packaged curriculum may be less effective than providing teachers with the autonomy, collaborative planning time, and dialogic professional spaces necessary to develop historically accurate, culturally responsive, and locally relevant instruction; and

WHEREAS, the [August 2026 the NYU Metro Center report, *Cultivating New Ground: Shifts Towards Culturally Responsive Curriculum*](#), evaluated five curricula nominated by educators, practitioners, and community members as promising examples of culturally responsive curriculum, using NYU Metro Center's Culturally Responsive ELA and CRSE STEAM Curriculum Scorecards; and

WHEREAS, once again the evaluation process centered the expertise of educators, students, parents, and community organizers, demonstrating that communities most affected by curriculum decisions can and should participate directly in evaluating, selecting, developing, and improving the materials used in their schools; and

WHEREAS, the report distinguishes between “**Old Ground**” curricula (those that uphold dominant narratives, provide minimal or harmful representation of marginalized communities, detach historical events from the humanity of affected people, and limit critical examination of race, culture, power, and injustice; which includes HMH Into Reading) and “**New Ground**” curricula that affirm marginalized voices, use asset-based narratives, connect learning to students' lives, and encourage critical thought and action; and

WHEREAS, the report demonstrates that comprehensive, standards-aligned, culturally responsive curriculum is possible and identifies existing curricula that provide substantially stronger models than culturally destructive or culturally insufficient commercial programs, contradicting any claim that school districts must choose between academic rigor and cultural responsiveness; and

WHEREAS, even though the five curricula examined were specifically nominated as among the field's most promising CRSE materials, none reached the Scorecards' threshold for full cultural

responsiveness: Black Studies, Genius & Joy, and Humanizing Math were rated overall as “Culturally Aware,” while Fishtank and Resistance Mapping were rated overall as demonstrating “Emerging Awareness”; and

WHEREAS, the report found that stronger curricula portray marginalized people as multidimensional, knowledgeable, powerful, creative, and capable of exercising agency, rather than reducing their histories to oppression, struggle, trauma, stereotypes, or deficit-based narratives; and

WHEREAS, the report found that culturally responsive curricula make academic learning more relevant by connecting content to students’ identities, everyday experiences, local histories, communities, and contemporary social conditions and by enabling students to apply their knowledge to authentic individual, community, and global problems; and

WHEREAS, the report identified critical thinking, investigation of multiple perspectives, analysis of systems and power, sociopolitical consciousness, community problem-solving, and opportunities for civic action as essential components of culturally responsive curriculum and not as optional supplements to core academic instruction; and

WHEREAS, the report concludes that cultivating and implementing culturally responsive curricula requires both financial and institutional investment, reinforcing the need to redirect funds from commercial curriculum mandates, digital platforms, and standardized assessment products toward educator learning, paid curriculum development time, community collaboration, and publicly controlled CRSE materials; and

WHEREAS, the report specifically advises administrators to stop adopting curricula without examining them through a culturally responsive lens and to stop expecting educators to independently repair culturally destructive materials after those materials have already been purchased and imposed; and

WHEREAS, requiring teachers to correct the omissions, stereotypes, biases, inaccuracies, and cultural harms contained in centrally mandated curricula places an unjust and uncompensated burden on educators while denying them the professional autonomy and resources necessary to create responsive instruction from the outset; and

WHEREAS, NYC Public Schools should instead provide educators with time, training, resources, and decision-making authority to use tools such as the NYU Metro Center Scorecards to evaluate

classroom materials, identify strengths and deficiencies, incorporate local student and family knowledge, and collaboratively develop more culturally responsive curricula; and

WHEREAS, the report's findings demonstrate that ending centralized curriculum mandates is not a call to abandon standards, instructional coherence, or evidence-based teaching, but a necessary step toward building a transparent, educator-led, community-accountable system in which academic rigor, cultural competence, critical consciousness, authentic assessment, and student agency are inseparable.

2026 NYC School Survey data and relevant curriculum

WHEREAS, the redesigned **2026 NYC School Survey** collected responses from more than 357,000 students in grades 6–12 and established a new citywide baseline for student experiences; and

WHEREAS, [only 49 percent of surveyed students](#) reported that most or all of their teachers connected what they were learning to life outside the classroom, meaning that more than half of responding students did not consistently experience this connection; and

WHEREAS, favorable responses were lowest among ninth-grade students, at only 45 percent, demonstrating that many students do not experience their classroom instruction as meaningfully connected to their lives, communities, interests, or futures; and

WHEREAS, student concerns about relevance cannot be solved by imposing more standardized and scripted materials; they require curricula and pedagogy that draw upon students' identities, questions, communities, cultures, and lived experiences as highlighted in this report; and

Connection to the NYS Portrait of a Graduate

WHEREAS, the **New York State Portrait of a Graduate** is intended to serve as a guiding framework for the state's educational system and identifies the competencies students should develop throughout their education, including critical thinking, innovative problem-solving, literacy across content areas, cultural competence, social-emotional competence, effective communication, and global citizenship; and

WHEREAS, these competencies cannot be developed only during high school or through

occasional stand-alone activities but must be cultivated from early childhood through graduation and reflected throughout curriculum, instruction, assessment, school culture, and student learning experiences; and

WHEREAS, CRSE, inquiry, project-based learning, whole books, collaborative learning, performance tasks, student reflection, and community-based learning are better aligned with the Portrait of a Graduate than scripted instruction, repetitive computer exercises, and standardized multiple-choice assessments; and

WHEREAS, NYC Reads was originally described as a \$100 million initiative, and the Adams/Banks administration announced approximately \$35 million for training and coaching during the first year of implementation; and

WHEREAS, despite years of implementation, NYC Public Schools has not provided the public with a complete, accessible accounting of expenditures connected to NYC Reads, including curriculum purchases, licenses, digital platforms, assessments, consulting, professional development, coaching, contract amendments, replacement materials, and school-level expenditures; and

WHEREAS, substantial public resources have been directed toward purchasing commercial curricula and training educators to implement vendor-created programs when those resources could instead support paid educator planning time, educator-led curriculum development, CRSE training, teacher collaboration, classroom libraries, whole books, arts and science instruction, special-education supports, multilingual education, and authentic assessment; and

WHEREAS, public funds should build lasting instructional expertise and publicly controlled educational resources within NYC Public Schools rather than creating long-term dependence on private curriculum, assessment, technology, and consulting companies; and

WHEREAS, NYC Public Schools requires schools to administer computer-based academic screeners multiple times each year, including commercial products such as Curriculum Associates' i-Ready and NWEA MAP Growth; and

WHEREAS, educators have reported that mandated screeners can consume substantial instructional time while producing scores and summary categories that do not provide sufficiently detailed or timely information about students' thinking, misconceptions, interests, strategies, language development, or learning needs; and

WHEREAS, a [2026 review published by the National Education Policy Center](#) found no randomized controlled trials or high-quality independent peer-reviewed studies demonstrating that i-Ready improves student learning and noted that a study of its reading program found no statistically significant relationship with ELA achievement; and

WHEREAS, the companies that sell i-Ready and MAP Growth publish studies and technical claims supporting their own products, underscoring the need for NYC Public Schools to commission independent evaluations before requiring hundreds of thousands of students to participate in these assessments; and

WHEREAS, no computer-adaptive screener, including i-Ready or MAP Growth, can by itself show how a child constructs an argument, explains mathematical reasoning, develops an idea through writing, reads with meaning, applies knowledge to a real problem, collaborates, creates, revises work, or responds to feedback; and

WHEREAS, authentic formative assessment occurs through teachers' daily examination of student writing, reading conferences, mathematical explanations, conversations, projects, portfolios, performances, observations, and other evidence of learning and is valuable because it enables educators who know their students to adapt instruction in real time; and

WHEREAS, commercial screeners should never replace the professional judgment of educators, direct teacher-student interaction, or authentic assessments embedded within classroom instruction; and

WHEREAS, HMH *Into Reading* has been integrated with Amira, an artificial-intelligence-powered platform that listens to children read aloud, analyzes their speech, identifies alleged errors, assigns assessments, and provides automated tutoring and feedback; and

Mandated curricula and the use of Generative AI

WHEREAS, Amira's use with early learners raises concerns about children's voice data, privacy, informed parental consent, algorithmic bias, screen time, accuracy across accents, dialects, disabilities, and speech differences, and the replacement of human interaction during a critical period of language, literacy, and social development; and

WHEREAS, families and educators have reported instances in which Amira repeatedly misidentified children's pronunciation or speech differences as reading errors, including concerns

involving students with hearing or speech-related disabilities; and

WHEREAS, even research reporting positive results for Amira has found only small effects in some settings, and existing evidence does not justify requiring young children to receive reading assessment or instruction from an AI system instead of a trained educator; and

WHEREAS, reading is a linguistic, cognitive, cultural, relational, and social process, and young children need opportunities to read with and receive responsive feedback from educators who understand their language, disability, culture, interests, emotional state, and individual development; and

WHEREAS, CEC4 supports the city's 2026–2027 moratorium, although we believe it should be a two-year minimum, on student-facing generative AI in grades 2-K–8 and believes that Amira and any other AI system that assesses, directs, corrects, or tutors young children must be included within that protection; and

WHEREAS, families, students, educators, School Leadership Teams, Community Education Councils, and local communities must have a meaningful role in curriculum and assessment decisions that directly affect their schools.

Therefore, be it resolved

RESOLVED, that CEC4 rejects the use of standardized-test scores, commercial screener scores, or year-to-year proficiency fluctuations as the primary measure of student learning, school quality, educator effectiveness, or curriculum success that will be used to make decisions on what is best for our NYCPS students; and be it further

RESOLVED, that CEC4 calls upon Mayor Zohran Mamdani, Chancellor Kamar Samuels, and NYC Public Schools to end the NYC Reads and NYC Solves centralized curriculum mandates and discontinue the requirement that schools use a restricted list of centrally selected commercial core programs; and be it further

RESOLVED, that NYC Public Schools shall phase out the compulsory use of HMH *Into Reading, Wit & Wisdom*, and EL Education as mandated core curricula and shall not replace them with another citywide, one-size-fits-all commercial curriculum mandate; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution does not prohibit a school community from choosing to use or adapt particular materials after an educator-led, transparent, and locally determined review; rather, it demands the elimination of centralized mandates and restoration of meaningful school-level decision-making; and be it further

RESOLVED, that educators, in collaboration with School Leadership Teams, students, and families, shall have meaningful authority to select, create, supplement, and adapt standards-aligned curricula based on the academic, cultural, linguistic, developmental, and disability-related needs of the students they teach; and be it further

RESOLVED, that NYC Public Schools shall discontinue the mandatory use of i-Ready, NWEA MAP Growth, and similar commercial computer-adaptive screeners and shall not require schools to use commercial assessment platforms as substitutes for teacher-created or teacher-administered formative assessment; and be it further

RESOLVED, that educators shall be supported in authentically assessing students through reading conferences, student writing, portfolios, projects, performances, mathematical explanations, discussions, observations, presentations, exhibitions of learning, and other classroom-based evidence that provides actionable information about how students think and learn; and be it further

RESOLVED, that authentic assessment plans shall be developed by educators with appropriate time, professional learning, and collaboration and shall not be used to increase punitive accountability requirements or administrative paperwork; and be it further

RESOLVED, that NYC Public Schools shall remove Amira and other student-facing AI tutoring or assessment systems from grades 2-K–12 and shall not reinstate them unless an independent public review establishes their developmental appropriateness, educational necessity, accessibility, accuracy, privacy protections, freedom from discriminatory bias, and effectiveness compared with human-delivered instruction; and be it further

RESOLVED, that no child's voice, reading behavior, biometric information, or other personally identifiable information shall be collected by an AI platform without transparent disclosure and meaningful, affirmative parental consent; and be it further

RESOLVED, that NYC Public Schools shall conduct an independent and publicly available evaluation of NYC Reads and NYC Solves examining:

1. Student outcomes across multiple measures;
2. Results disaggregated by district, school, grade, race and ethnicity, disability status, multilingual-learner status, economic status, housing status, and curriculum;
3. Cultural responsiveness, representation, developmental appropriateness, accessibility, and academic quality;
4. The availability of whole books, writing, inquiry, science, social studies, play, project-based learning, and the arts;
5. Educator workload, professional autonomy, planning time, training, and experiences;
6. Student and family experiences;
7. The impact of computer-based testing and technology failures; and
8. Comparisons with educator-developed, culturally responsive, community-based, and performance-assessment approaches; and be it further

RESOLVED, that NYC Public Schools shall publish a complete financial accounting of NYC Reads and NYC Solves, including all curriculum purchases, materials, licenses, assessments, digital platforms, AI tools, consultants, training, coaching, professional development, contract amendments, school-level expenditures, and vendor payments; and be it further

RESOLVED, that funding currently directed toward mandated commercial curricula, screeners, and digital instructional products shall be redirected toward:

- Paid teacher planning and curriculum-development time;
- Sustained CRSE professional learning and coaching;
- Teacher-led curriculum teams;
- Whole books and culturally responsive classroom libraries;
- Ethnic studies and local history;
- Inquiry, writing, science, social studies, arts, play, and project-based learning;
- Multilingual and disability-accessible instructional materials;
- Teacher-developed authentic assessments and performance tasks;
- Smaller classes and additional instructional staff; and
- Family, student, and community participation in curriculum development; and be it further

RESOLVED, that NYC Public Schools shall restore the goals of the Universal Mosaic Curriculum through a transparent, publicly controlled process in which educators, students, families, CECs, researchers, and community organizations co-develop rigorous CRSE curricula and resources for New York City students; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the New York State Portrait of a Graduate shall be reflected throughout NYC Public Schools from early childhood through high school and implemented through CRSE, inquiry,

project-based learning, authentic assessment, student reflection, whole books, collaborative learning, and meaningful connections between classroom learning and students' lives and communities; and be it further

RESOLVED, that NYC Public Schools shall establish a CRSE curriculum-development body composed substantially of classroom educators, students, parents, CEC representatives, multilingual-learning specialists, special educators, CRSE experts, and community-based organizations to guide this work; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the NYCDOE shall provide a public, disaggregated analysis of District 4's 2026 assessment, screener, and School Survey results to CEC4, including information by school, grade, race and ethnicity, disability status, multilingual-learner status, housing status, and curriculum, while protecting student privacy; and be it further

RESOLVED, that no District 4 school shall be subjected to closure, consolidation, reorganization, co-location, leadership removal, or other punitive intervention primarily because of standardized test or commercial-screener results; and be it further

RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution shall be sent to Mayor Zohran Mamdani; Schools Chancellor Kamar Samuels; the Panel for Educational Policy; the New York State Board of Regents; State Education Commissioner Betty A. Rosa; the chairs of the New York State Senate and Assembly Education Committees; the United Federation of Teachers; and posted on the CEC4 website for the East Harlem community.

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 Kiera Jerez Alston seconded by Tia Jackson.

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