

Community Education Council – District 13

Candidates

Candidate: Tanya L. Channell

DBN: 13K003

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

Since 2011, I've volunteered with the PENCIL organization to partner with a principal of a NYC public elementary school to facilitate a program wherein participating 5th graders learned the basics of financial literacy. I am also a volunteer with Junior Achievement and Operation HOPE to provide instructions on financial literacy to NYC public school students during specific times of the year. Also, I am a volunteer tour guide with the NYC 9/11 Tribute Foundation.

Personal Statement

Candidate: Lillian Sorrentini

DBN: 13K044

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I have been an active PTA/SLT member for the last 5 yrs

Personal Statement

I have been a positive role model to PS44 in the last 10 yrs. I have provided a nurturing environment to the staff, students & parent @ P.S 44 for the last 10 yrs. I have been an independent thinker to P.S 44 & my community for the last 10yrs. After joining the PTA/SLT bd. 5 yrs ago I believe I have made a difference in the way we outreach our parents & students.

Candidate: Keesha Ghee

DBN: 13K313

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

After school aide for the Princeton Review

Personal Statement

I feel that I would be a good candidate because I've worked in a school environment with K-5 graders and I loved helping kids with their academic studies as well as preparing them for upcoming city test

Candidate: Jessica Blatt

DBN: 13K493

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I am in my second year serving on the Executive Board of the Arts & Letters Parent Association, last year as chair of the Fundraising Committee and this year as Chair of the Annual Appeal and co-Chair of the Events Committee. This year for the first time I am also serving on the School Leadership Team. I also represented our Parent Association at the District 13 Presidents' Council in 2011-2012 and for much of this year (though I have recently had to step down due to a scheduling conflict with the meeting time). This year I served on the Executive Board of that organization as Recording Secretary. I have participated in many parent-led organizing activities and meetings focused on making NYC public education more responsive to parents.

Personal Statement

I have one child in a District 13 public school, and another set to enter Pre-K next year. I am committed to helping to build a strong public school system that treats everyone fairly and equitably and responds in meaningful ways to parents. I am an educator myself, at the college level, and education policy is an area in which I teach and do research. I have a keen interest in the issues facing our schools and District 13 parents. I feel that I have been effective in helping to organize and re-launch the Parent Association of my daughter's school, which only two years ago expanded to become a K-8 school. I also serve on the SLT of that school, where we have been dealing with leadership changes and the growing pains of an expanding school serving a diverse population. Serving on the Community Education Council seems like both a logical extension of the work that I have already been doing and a chance to have a wider impact and contribute to the strengthening of schools--and particularly of parent involvement with and influence on school policies--across the District.

Candidate: Ismat Ara Begum

DBN: 13K009

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

Learning Leader Volunteer

Personal Statement

Candidate: Tracian Elisha Shaibu

DBN: 13K003

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

Outside of the PTA, I have spent most of my life as a mentor to young girls through programs with the YMCA and my sorority Delta Sigma Theta.

Personal Statement

My name is Tracian Shaibu I have a B.S. in Accounting, a Master in Business Administration and I am currently pursuing a Doctorate in Business Administration. I have three daughters and a wonderful husband I currently work for the city of New York. I am an active member of Alpha Kappa Psi Business Fraternity and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. In my free time I create my own garments. It is my belief that all children no matter race, religion, or socio-economic standing have the right to a great education. I was raised by a single mother who taught me to work hard, be honest, and have respect and these are the values I hope to instill in my own children. To whom much is given much is required this statement holds true to ever man or woman given the gift of a child, a life full of potential with no fare. It is the job of the parent to expose and guide children that they may grow and learn to think freely and thoughtfully.

Candidate: Diane Stephen

DBN: 13K133

IEP/ELL: IEP

Applicant Background

Secretary of the PTA Board at P.S. 133K -- William A. Butler Elementary

Personal Statement

Seeing that each and every child receives a quality education is my passion. As a parent of a child with an IEP, I know the importance first hand of making sure that children receive the services that are mandated that will make their learning experience a positive one. It is with that passion, dedication and determination that drives me to show up to everything that will benefit my child's education and all

children in the New York City Public School System. I often share that information and encourage other parents to attend workshops and get involved. I feel that I would be a great asset to CEC District 13 as an IEP Parent or Parent Member because I fully understand it takes a Village to educate a child.

Candidate: Benjamin F. Greene

DBN: 13K313

IEP/ELL: IEP

Applicant Background

I have served on District 13 Presidents' Council for the last 5 years. I am currently the PTA president at one of my children school. I am currently on the CEC for District 13. I also served as the Co-chair and currently the 1st Vice Chair on the Chancellors Parent Advisory Council. I am a current member of the District Leadership Team, I also serve as a member on the SLT of my child's school. I have facilitated numerous SLT and PA/PTA workshops for the parents of District 13.

Personal Statement

Representing District 13 has been an honor, I bring a wealth of knowledge to the table as well as being a team player in getting things done for the district. I believe in training other parents and bringing them on board in advocating for the district and the families of district 13. In the past 4 years I have grown in my endeavors in advocating for parents. I know that communicating with the parents of the district is vital in the work that the CEC does. I believe that everyone has a say and their voice should be heard. I know that in my duties as a CEC member I stand fast at representing the core group of people who elected me to advocate on their behalf. I am very transparent at what I do and sharing information is something I believe that all elected CEC members should practice. I believe in the philosophy that we are here to advocate for the children of District 13 and not the special interest.

Candidate: Crystal Telfair

DBN: 13K093

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

Personal Statement

Before today I never thought about applying to the CEC. Today was parent teacher conference which I attended with my grandson. While waiting to see the teacher, I began to ask myself how I can be a help to the school. Before I exited the building I asked the PTA coordinator about volunteering in the office. She told me what I needed to do. That same evening I received a call about applying for the CEC. They left a message with the website to apply, and I thought this is another way for me to get involved.

Candidate: Scott L. Semer

DBN: 13K008

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

Personal Statement

As a professor at Columbia Law School, a practicing lawyer, writer, and parent, I will bring a unique perspective and valuable skills to our educational council. In today's focus on testing and measurement it is important that we not lose sight of the fact that the real world does not consist of tests but of problems that require creativity, persistence, and collaboration to solve. Teaching our students to love learning, to have the courage to experiment with novel, creative solutions to problems, to challenge conventional ways of doing things when necessary, and to have the confidence to work through failure to find meaningful and lasting success is the only way to ensure that our children will be able to flourish and thrive in the dynamic economy of the twenty-first century.

Candidate: Vasilla Caldeira

DBN: 13K020; 13K492

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I have participated in several PTA/PA associations. I am currently an active member of the SLT in school 13k020. I have also served on the PA of Arts and Letters as chair of its Hospitality Committee. I have also served on the CEC of District 18. I continue to take an active role as a parent participant in the districts where my children attend school.

Personal Statement

As an active parent of over 15 years in the public school system I have with all good intentions submitted myself to learning as much as I can about the system that serves our children. A system that chances and causes change in the lives of our most valuable. I have always considered myself to be an advocate for those parents that need guidance though such a system and to help parents become confident in fighting for the rights of their own children. My desire is to maintain the promise given to our children for a fair and decent education for all. All children are challenged in learning and attaining what will carry them to success as adults. My life in this aspect is a dedication to my seven children and the children in the district I willing represent.

Candidate: Ayanna Blaize

DBN: 13K020

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I was the PTA President for 4 years at my children's school, which helped raise money to start up the art program in conjunction with Pratt Institute, and the PS20 Farms program, which grows plants and vegetables for healthy eating in the community.

Personal Statement

I am a hard working parent that makes a difference in my children's lives as well as the children around them. I have served District 13 on many levels, from volunteering in the classrooms and cafeteria of the school, leading the PTA for 4 years and helping bring enriching programs to the school, serving on the SLT for ways to help the education in the school, contributing to the President's Council by working with other Presidents of PA/PTA's in the district, and presently working hard on the CEC13 to ensure that our district continues to strive for the betterment of our children. I would love to continue to serve District 13 on the CEC.

Candidate: Renee Lynette Burke

DBN: 13K133

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

PTA Financial Secretary Nov 2010 - June 2011 PTA President - July 2011 - Present Active Member of District 13 President's Council Participant with District 13 CEC.

Personal Statement

My name is Renee Burke, and I volunteer at PS 133 to help my school/parent body progress and grow to newer heights; and I assist with District 13 related issues to offer assistance and support whenever I can. It is all about the kids and I try to do my best to make sure my daughter's schooling experience will be positive and on track, and I hope to extend my work so that other kids can have wider opportunities and points of view represented for their benefit.

Candidate: Robert Frederick Underwood

DBN: 13K282

IEP/ELL: IEP

Applicant Background

1. Last year, I created and brought to PS 282 a program to teach software engineering and entrepreneurship to 4th and 5th graders, taught by local venture capitalists, Deloitte, and NYC start-ups. I am also active in several other similar programs within the city which have grown out of the NYC start-up community oriented at teaching software engineering to high school students. 2. Member of Youth, Human Services, and Education committee on Brooklyn Community Board 6. 3. Active in PS282 PTO, especially chess team parental leadership. Have piloted social media program for school and school PTO.

Personal Statement

My name is Rob Underwood. I have lived in D13, in Brooklyn, since 2000. I am married with 3 children; my 2 oldest children attend PS 282, our neighborhood zone school. My priorities if chosen to a CEC would be: 1. Promoting the benefits of diversity and diverse student bodies. 2. Creating new opportunities to expand STEM education. 3. Blending the best of the "old" with the best of "new." What I have learned in my 13 years in Brooklyn is it is critical for those who are newer to these communities - people like me - to listen a lot first. Creating a culture that values ALL people and views is important. Advocating for those children on both the lower functioning and higher achieving ends of the spectrum. My only full sibling is mentally retarded. My two oldest were in special education for speech delays. Because of programs such as Early Intervention along with the hard work of some wonderful people at the DoE and D13 office, my children got early help and are now in G&T. Exposure to high quality education is THE critical equalizer of opportunities. Each of us must work hard to create amazing schools for all of our students, regardless of background, so they all have the best chance they can to succeed in life.

Candidate: Amy Shire

DBN: 13K008

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITIES: Member, District 13 CEC, April 2012-current; Member, PS 8 School Leadership Team (Sept 2009-June 2011); Spear-headed parent awareness activities about a DOE proposal regarding grades K-2 high-stakes testing, and advocacy efforts to oppose such testing (Spring 2010); Co-Chair, PS 8 PTA enrichment committee (Sept 2007-June 2009) I've also spent the last six months volunteering in the classroom, providing guidance to the PS 8 robotics team on a research project. Teaching elementary school kids for the first time deepened further my appreciation and respect for the skills of good teachers! **COMMUNITY & CIVIC ACTIVITIES** I've been involved in volunteer civic engagement activities throughout the last twenty-plus years, including: Teaching English as a Second Language to adult immigrants; providing social supports to immigrant detainees in a detention facility (Wackenhut, in Queens) post-9/11; participating in several Superstorm Sandy relief activities; and participating in several annual census counts of the homeless in NYC, sponsored by the NYC Dept. of Homeless Services. I've spent my professional life in public health non-profits.

Personal Statement

I'm a member of District 13's CEC, which has produced some exciting accomplishments this year, and I'm passionate about continuing its potential. I began my journey to the CEC as a concerned parent invested in my child's education. It became apparent that parent voices were needed to support our school community's efforts to maintain a high quality education for our children; and that each community must support all our district schools for all our children to ultimately thrive. Our district's obstacles to a quality education include school budget cuts which threaten essentials such as arts curricula, science materials, and school aides; DOE policies which stress high-stakes testing and other "accountability" measures over more thoughtful, developmentally appropriate, creative approaches to learning; and gross disparities between schools in distribution of resources. Countering this is daunting, but I'm committed to working on agendas developed by our school communities. We must advocate for a more collaborative relationship with the DOE, insisting that they be responsive to our district's needs, and not setting the agenda without us. I have the enduring commitment to do this work, and would welcome the opportunity to continue.

Candidate: Sheila Letang

DBN: 13K054

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

For the last two years I have actively represented as the Bedford Stuyvesant Early Childhood Development Center as their Area Rep. I also sit on their school readiness committee. While my daughter attended junior high school, I actively participated on the PTA, SLT, and Presidents Council.

Personal Statement

I presently sit on the CEC 13 panel and would like to continue with the opportunity of serving the parents and children of our district. My experience within the head start system has reinforced my passion that advocating for our children and school is a must.

Candidate: Ed Brown

DBN: 13K287; 13K492

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

Community Board 2 Brooklyn Job & Economic and Youth & Education Committee. P.T.A. President. Youth Counselor. Coach and Mentor. Tenant Association President.

Personal Statement

I have been working with and assisting families and youth in the community for more than 20 years. I have the ability to reach today's youth and retain their attention. Myself being born and raised in an underserved community I have the knowledge and hands on experience needed to help provide effective guidance to families that will allow them to create a better quality of life for their future.