

Community Education Council – District 3

Candidates

Candidate: Burnitta Gadson

DBN: 03M180

IEP/ELL: IEP

Applicant Background

I have worked with both students and teachers in both special and general education. I have attended all parent/teacher conferences and am actively involved in the development of all my children academically, psychologically and socially. I have tutored children while visiting my children's classroom teachers and assisted in keeping the classes well structured during field trips which involve chaperoning.

Personal Statement

I am interested in the welfare of all children in the public school system. I am seeking a position in one of the three open seats because I believe the educational policies of the NYC Public Schools should benefit all children regardless of one's learning styles or differences. I hope to make a difference in the lives of our young people by working with the Board of Education on a united front in improving the education system and policies. Thus providing effective educational and social progress for all NYC Public school children.

Candidate: Olayia Deen

DBN: 03M191

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

Member of CEC3 since 2007. 2007-09 concentrated efforts on outreach and communication to middle school families. 2009-11 CEC3 member concentrating efforts on concerns of Harlem parents and CSD3 school communities. 2011-13 CEC3 member affiliated with magnet schools. Also focused efforts on communicating and advocating with parents regarding co-location of charter schools. 2013 co-founded The Parents Club which meets monthly to discuss education and parenting concerns of families in Community School District 3. 2005-7 was PTA President and SLT member of Crossroads Middle School in CSD3. 2008-11 assisted with fundraising and other committees at PS 75. Member of PS 163 PTA 2000-2005 coordinating Saturday Author Readings and Book Give-A-Way as part of PS 163 recruitment effort . President of 527 Tenant's Association from 1996-2002.

Personal Statement

It is my conviction that parent involvement in our public school system makes for a more engaged child and ultimately a better school system. In my past 13 years of involvement in NYC public schools I have broadened my perspective and appreciation of parenting in NYC. My experiences have given me an appreciation of how difficult it is to provide a good solid education to all children. Unfortunately I see an information gap and lack of parent engagement regarding education policies . I see many children still suffering inspite of the "new" reforms. To me, these reforms have been inadequate for children of lower socio-economic and immigrant families as well as children with special needs - including G&T. I am hopeful for the next 2 years as we will welcome in a new Mayor. I have seen first hand how one charter group has dismantled public input in Community School District 3 educational footprint. I look forward to a more equitable system where funds go to all children. For the future, I would like to see more science labs and more emphasis on physical education, as I believe these will enhance the educational success of all of our children in CSD3 and NYC.

Candidate: Jennifer Lupinacci

DBN: 03M009

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

Personal Statement

Candidate: Michael Cantor

DBN: 03M087

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

AS a parent at PS 87, I have helped edit the "Backpack News," our school newsletter, and have helped my wife, a class parent for the past two years, with her class parent duties. I am also on the parents' committee for my daughter's Hebrew school. In the community, I spend a day a week as a volunteer attending physician in the Bellevue medicine clinic.

Personal Statement

I am a firm believer in the importance of a strong public education system. The upcoming cycle for CEC's will be extremely important, particularly for working with a new mayor and ensuring that candidates are as committed as we are to investing in our schools. Students should emerge from school as enriched and well-rounded people who not only pass tests, but can also communicate what they've learned to contribute to the world around them. I am particularly interested in quality measurement, and specifically getting beyond measures that just look at improving processes rather than meaningful

outcomes that are more meaningful to parents and students rather than politicians and the press. Balancing the needs and viewpoints of administrators, students, and parents is also an essential skill for serving on a CEC; my experience with a multi-cultural patient population and positions in hospital administration and management in my current job has taught me how to walk those sometimes fine lines. As a CEC member, I will work to increase investment, ensure that performance measurement is transparent and effective, and implement policies that advance the enrichment of District 3 public school students.

Candidate: Lisa Frazier

DBN: 03M145

IEP/ELL: IEP

Applicant Background

Annual Block Party.

Personal Statement

Hi I'm Lisa Frazier. The reason I'm running for office is that I want to take part in our children's academic success. I have 4 children and am experienced in advocating educational growth for my children. I'd like to share my skills and experiences with others who can and will contribute to the District.

Candidate: Iris Springer-Elkerson

DBN: 03M163

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

Since my children started Pre-School I have always been very active and involved with assisting their respective Teachers and School Administrators. I became a Class Parent in 2008. I have held that position at each of my two children's classes and schools they have attended. I am very proud to say that I was also on the Board of the Parent Association at St. Benedict's Day Nursery School. I held the position of Vice President until 2010. We are now happily at P.S. 163 where I am the Class Parent for my Son's Class. My children began the year in the Dual Language Program. It has been an amazing journey and learning experience for our family. I have become familiar with the Dual Language goals and curriculum. I am also an Active Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated. I am very focused on giving back to the community. From Teenage Mentoring Programs to Food and Clothing Drives, Health Fairs and Reading One to One Programs, Education and Service are what we dedicate our time too.

Personal Statement

My Name is Iris Springer-Elkerson. I have been practising Law for over 16 years. I have only been a Mom for 8 years. But hands down, it has been the BEST, MOST REWARDING, AND CHALLENGING POSITION I HAVE EVER HELD! The fight for a solid and exceptional education has at times rendered me speechless and frightened. But I still believe education equals freedom! ALL CHILDREN deserve the best educational opportunities. All children are all born exceptional. Education is simply a tool to help enhance their abilities and exercise their brains. Every child CAN and SHOULD excel academically. With the right exposure, implementation, and input, children progress and succeed. Whether a family lives in District 5 or District 3, our children must be prepared academically to compete with children across the country and internationally. I would like to serve on the Community Education Council to work on policies that encourage the very best education our City, our State, and our Country has to offer. I sincerely and humbly request your vote for the opportunity to obtain a Seat on the Council. Thank you.

Candidate: Farailda Belliard

DBN: 03M145

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I was PTA President at P.S. 21 in the Bronx, and am currently a Learning Leader, SLT member and Title I Vice President at P.S. 145 in Manhattan. In addition to my experience as a parent leader and volunteer, I am also the parent of a Special Education student who is currently in high school and two students who receive accommodations through Section 504. I have extensive experience navigating the IEP process, communicating effectively with school staff and administration, and coordinating fundraising and family events.

Personal Statement

As a proud graduate of New York City public schools, I strongly believe in the work that is done every day by the dedicated members of our city's educational system. As a member of the District 3 CEC, I intend to work closely with parent leaders within the community to bring pressing issues of inclusion, advocacy, empowerment and enrichment for the students and families of the District. I have been honored and blessed to be a witness to amazing transformation in schools where the parents, teachers, staff and community members take an active role in the improvement of education for our students. I look forward to learning from my fellow CEC members, as well as sharing my own experiences and best practices so that District 3 can become an example of all that is possible for our students and parents to achieve.

Candidate: Joseph Angelo Fiordaliso

DBN: 03M199

IEP/ELL:

Applicant Background

I currently serve as Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer's Appointee to Community Education Council District 3. Prior to my appointment I was an elected Parent-at-Large member of the PS199 Parent Teacher Association. I have been and continue to be active in the PS199 and District 3 school community.

Personal Statement

I am the Manhattan Borough President's appointee to CEC3. I am the parent of District 3 children and got involved with CEC3 after experiencing first-hand the effects of overcrowding on my neighborhood school. New York City has an obligation to provide our children with a quality education, and I wish to continue my service on CEC3 to make sure this happens. Specific accomplishments: - Worked to create PS452 to help alleviate overcrowding; - Fought for faster PCB remediation; - Opposed closure of Wadleigh middle school; - Opposed co-location of charter schools in public school spaces; - Advocated for a new school at Riverside South; - Supported new middle schools for District 3. I am currently leading efforts to scrutinize the proposed demolition and redevelopment of several District 3 schools. Beyond the issues facing our District, we should be alarmed that CEC3 has become dysfunctional and lost its ability to effectively advocate and represent parent interests. We need to get CEC3 away from in-fighting and personal allegations and get back to work on behalf of District 3 families. I respectfully ask for your support.

Candidate: Michele Sweeting-Decaro

DBN: 03M165

IEP/ELL: IEP

Applicant Background

Personal Statement

As the mom of a sweet, smart 1st grader in District 3, a former kindergarten teacher for 10 years, and currently an educator on the college level, I see education as paramount for all children. This is particularly true for IEP and ELL students in a diverse community such as D3 and at the thriving PS 165. I believe that the success of our children in D3 strongly impacts our community. I'd like to be an advocate for D3 students and teachers by helping to endorse policies and programs that will effectively work for our community. I recognize that students have different needs, and our schools need the support of the community to create opportunities for each child to reach their learning potential. For instance, we have the Bloomingdale School of Music, Karate for Children, and the YMCA afterschool program as well as having a great relationship with Teacher's College. Furthermore, being a part of the CEC D3 would allow me to share in empowering our school with our neighboring schools in working together, in other words, we want to build relationships where neighborhood parents feel their neighborhood schools are great options. In essence, I welcome the opportunity to serve and make a difference on the CEC District 3.

Candidate: Barbara Denham

DBN: 03M054; 03M166

IEP/ELL: IEP

Applicant Background

I was on the School Leadership Team for three years at PS 166 and was parent co-chair all 3 years; I was on the PTA Executive Board for 3 years (including the current year), serving as Financial Secretary. My son has an IEP and needs occupational therapy regularly.

Personal Statement

As a parent of 3 children in district 3, I am acutely aware of the many needs our district faces. I have watched as the growing population has created serious overcrowding issues that have already started to affect the middle schools. I want to work on the team to help solve these and other issues. I served on our school's school leadership team for three years as well as our PTA executive board for three years, so I am very familiar with the many challenges we face. As an economist and statistician in the commercial real estate industry, I hope to bring my expertise to the council to find optimal solutions to the problems we face as we move forward during these transitional years.

Candidate: Stefan Koster

DBN: 03M245

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I have been an active parent that has participated in the CECD3 middle school committee since 2010. Together with others, I have presented data on middle schools in D3 at the CEC committee level and to a select group of D3 principals upon invitation. I helped develop and set up the Principal's Forum in D3.

Personal Statement

Hello. My name is Stefan Koster and my wife and I have a daughter who now attends 6th grade in a D3 middle school. I have been an active participant in many CEC meetings over the last couple of years and have gained in depth knowledge about the elementary and middle schools in D3. Since 2010 I have been a member of the CECD3 middle school committee. Several other members of the committee and I developed and shared a broad range of data on the district's middle schools. If elected to the CEC I intend to focus my energy on middle schools and use my position to advocate for desperately needed quality middle school seats in our district. Thank you.

Candidate: Theresa L.C. Hammonds

DBN: 03M242

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I am a current CEC3 member, a former PTA President, and a former officer of a local economic development board. I have worked extensively on issues related to testing and I have a keen interest in issues that relate to parent involvement and empowerment. I have personally sponsored parent forums and have created workshops to educate parents about various topics. I am very interested in creating a different kind of parent education program.

Personal Statement

As a sitting member of the council, I have enjoyed advocating for students across the district. I am interested in returning for another term because I did not serve a full term. I came to the council as a replacement, thus, I believe I have not had enough time to really effect change. During my tenure on the council, I have been very interested in issues that relate to co-locations, testing and environmental concerns. I really want to return to the council so that I may be involved with crafting policy that will hopefully lead to positive changes as they relate to these district-wide issues. I am also very interested increasing parent activity in the northern part of the district.

Candidate: Susan Marie Albow

DBN: 03M163

IEP/ELL:

Applicant Background

I am a class parent for my child's kindergarden class. I have worked as their field trip coordinator and specifically have focused on field trips aimed at the dual language learner. My background is in science. I have both an undergraduate and graduate degree in biology and medicine. I have responsibilities teaching medical students within my work environment. I have chosen to be a full time mother during the week and an emergency medicine physician during the weekends. I also attend Spanish classes and have an interest in becoming a foster parent.

Personal Statement

Early childhood education remains forefront in our success as a nation. Schools need to better prepare our children for international lives. How will our educational system distinguish itself from others? I am an advocate for bilingual immersion as a road to the future. I will also argue for radical reform of science education, as I see it as a key factor in resolving the current sustainability crisis. I would like to build upon the belief that it is really important to help other people, and include service learning as part of the regular school curriculum. Smaller class size is paramount. More physical education time is a must. Positive value assets to teach our children would include caring, equality and social justice, integrity,

honesty, responsibility, and restraint. The commitment to help kids succeed in our changing world starts here.

Candidate: J. Conrad Fagan

DBN: 03M163

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

Vice President, Membership & Participation, P.S. 163, NYDOE CSD #3, Parent Teacher Association, New York, NY, 2012 Present Co-Chair, School Leadership Team, PS 145, NYDOE CSD #3, VP, Parent Teacher Association, New York, NY 2009 - 2010 Chair, Delegate Agency Policy Committee, West Harlem Head Start Organization, NYC, 2008 - 2010 President, 600 Monroe Street Block Association, Community District #3, Brooklyn, NY, 1997 - 2002 Chair, Membership Committee, BCA Coaches Association, NY Metro Chapter, 1994 - 1998

Personal Statement

As a concerned and informed parent in CSD #3, my interest in serving NYDOE students/families stems from witnessing firsthand the social and educational challenges NYC families face in high need communities. Many parents, for a variety of reasons, are not yet at capacity to advocate for their children's education and build working partnerships with teachers/administrators, as educators seem overwhelmed with administrative and school performance demands that parent-school relationships and communications go under-developed. These "gaps" often result in decisions being made by a "minority" of interests on critical school and district resources. I'd like to serve the CEC; advocate for and offer new insights on behalf of the children of "uninvolved or high need families," as well as work with parent peers and educators to strategically resolve issues, build parent support/trust, and identify uncommon alternatives that increase the quality of education/services for every child in the CSD.

Candidate: Zoe G. Foundotos

DBN: 03M087; 03M452

IEP/ELL: IEP

Applicant Background

PS 452: Fundraising Co-Chair -- 2 years. Columbus Park West Nursery School: Board of Managers -- 2 years as Chair, 1 year as Vice Chair, 1 year as Secretary. PS87: Corporate Solicitation Committee for Annual Auction 3 years, Playground Monitor 2 years. Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church: Director of Religious Education -- 4 years.

Personal Statement

I believe strongly in the power of a public school education. By working together to build a strong public school system, communities have the ability to give all their children an opportunity to excel and reach their fullest potential. My children attend two different schools; one well established and one brand new. I have been active in both schools and have a view of some of the challenges they both face. I've also come to understand that different schools have different needs. I hope to serve on the CEC3 so that I can represent our schools and have their needs heard and answered. I want to be actively involved in helping my District 3 community work toward solutions for what I believe are two of its greatest challenges; overcrowding and placement of charter schools. I feel we can do this by continuing to offer perspective, provide feedback and represent our children's needs to the DOE as it makes educational policies.

Candidate: Noah Eliot Gotbaum

DBN: 03M243; 03M245

IEP/ELL: IEP

Applicant Background

I have been a member of CEC3 for 4 years. Prior to that I was an SLT member at PS 87. Since two of my 3 children have IEPs I have significant experience dealing with the Special Ed system - which is a nightmare for parents and students alike. I also am an ELL tutor in Spanish so have been working with the ELL populations for over 25 years - another hugely neglected population in our public school system.

Personal Statement

I am applying to serve another term on CEC3, having been an effective advocate for public school parents and students over the past four years. I have led advocacy against overcrowding, school closings and charter school co-locations, and to hold the DOE accountable for PCB removal, to diminish our reliance on high stakes testing, and ensuring community outreach on the potential demolition of ps 199 and 191, additional middle school seats, and seeking a D3 preference high school. While I am running for City Council and hope to take office in January 2014, I am running for another term because over the next 9 months our parents, students and community face significant challenges as the Bloomberg administration seeks to make its lasting imprint on our public education system before leaving office. The DOE will try to add a number of charter schools, sell off and demolish two of our precious elementary schools, and impose its will on the disposition of the emptying Beacon building, the setup of the new school at Riverside Center, while seeking to avoid dealing with the PCB issues. During this critical time, District 3 parents and students need strong, experienced and effective advocates. I pledge to continue to do so.

Candidate: Szilvia Page

DBN: 03M084

IEP/ELL: IEP

Applicant Background

I have been participating in different committees through my son`s public school`s PTA. Our Garden Committee is working on fundraising and building a community garden behind our school and a science garden on the building`s rooftop. I regularly attend to PTA meetings about all different subjects too. My younger son is attending to special education preschool, so I have plenty of experience related to Special Education. I use to be a social worker in my home country, Hungary, I took part of several non profit organizations, which helped underprivileged families and students.

Personal Statement

I have 2 children in the public school system. I spend most of my time with their school related issues, and volunteering at their schools. During my searches for schools - both General Education and Special Education -, and networking with other parents and professionals I gained so much knowledge about our school system. I believe I could be a great help for the Citywide and Community Educational Councils with my experience here in New York City, and back from Budapest.

Candidate: Laurie Frey

DBN: 03M054; 03M166

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I have worked as a PTA member in five schools, including middle and high schools. I also served two years on a School Leadership Team. I have served the past two years as a special education parent representative to the District Leadership Team, which reviews educational policy for the district. I currently serve as the Secretary of the CECE3. In that capacity, I have regularly attended public hearings to make public comments on behalf of District 3 schools.

Personal Statement

A strong district makes strong schools, and District 3 parents and children are the best. I would be honored to serve for a second term on the CEC3. I have been a District 3 parent for 14 years, and I am passionate about D3 schools. My two younger children attend D3 schools in the fourth and seventh grades. I also have a child who attends high school and one in college. I am a parent of children with learning disabilities and a strong advocate. Personal experience has taught me how equal access and an equal educational benefit are part of every student`s sound, basic education. Reading educational policy and digging through DOE reports helps me get past rhetoric and understand how DOE decisions impact our children`s lives. The most important, rewarding and interesting part of serving on the CEC3, is learning to know students, families and school communities from across District 3. District 3 parents have a reputation for working hard and standing strong. As a CEC3 council member, I can do no less.

Candidate: Charisse Thomas

DBN: 03M250

IEP/ELL: IEP

Applicant Background

To Whom It May Concern, My name is Charisse Thomas and at this particular time I am the parent of a female 6th grader who attends school at MS 250- West Side Collaborative. and I am responding to the volunteer CEC position. Please find my applicant background to entail my experience. I believe I am a qualified parent/professional seeking to fill this posion and better the NYCDOE in many ways. I am currently an NYPD School Safety Agent, and, prior to this position I was a stay at home mom which would always see the PTA at my sons school which was P.S. 274 at the time and criticize them and mock them for volunteering and not getting paid until one day the PTA President which whom I conceded stated to me "Why don't you stop talking about us and join us". Low and behold it was the most rewarding experience I had ever really truly had. She registered me as a Learning Leader and it took off from there. I started volunteering in the classrooms ran for PTA President and low and behold I won. I love interacting with the public.

Personal Statement