

Community Education Council – District 15

Candidates

Candidate: Laura Victoir

DBN: 15K058

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I am an academic, so I have spent a lot of time in school. I currently teach in the History Department at Hunter College, as well as tutor students for whom English is not their first language at St. Joseph's College, Brooklyn.

Personal Statement

As a teacher and academic, I hold the importance of education in high esteem. Eventually, I will have three children in the New York City public school system, and I would like to do my part to make not only their experiences, but those of all the children, as fruitful and enjoyable as possible. I feel that dedicated parental involvement, whether in the form of serving on the PTA, as a class parent or on the Community Education Council, is an integral and valuable part of the education system. It is for this reason that I would be very happy to serve the District 15 CEC to the best of my capabilities.

Candidate: Michael Cantone

DBN: 15K039

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

Personal Statement

As a lifelong New Yorker I always wanted my children to be fortunate enough to receive the best education, in the best public school system, in the most important city in the world, just as I did. As my eldest child started to make her way through our school system, the feeling to get more involved and give back grew stronger and with the addition of our second child to PS. 39 I knew it was time to get involved in some way. It wasn't until our school faced the possibility of losing the diversity that makes it so special, through a proposed rezoning, that I realized working as a representative for District 15 with the CEC was the perfect forum. I would be honored to give back to the system and the people who gave me the fundamental tools to be who I am today, just as my Father did for my sister and I when we were young.

Candidate: Hope M. Gause

DBN: 15K442

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I am heavily involved in our schools PTA and SLT

Personal Statement

I am interested in serving on the CEC because as a member of the SLT and PTA I feel I could be of value knowing first hand the issues going on in my child's school. I would also like to serve on the CEC because I feel that I can help make a difference and am a dedicated parent.

Candidate: Regina Stone

DBN: 15K261

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I am the class parent and PTA parent for my daughter's kindergarten class. I am excited about learning about the NYC school system and identifying ways I can help improve the experience not only for my child but for all NYC children.

Personal Statement

Our children spend the majority of their days in school. As such, we need to ensure their school experience is the best it can be. As parents, we have the power to support our schools and help where needed. Not just for the school and administration, but for our children. I would like to be apart of this advisory group. I am willing to work for our children and our community to strive to make NYC public schools the best of the best.

Candidate: Isaac Josephson

DBN: 15K154

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I am an active member of the PTA, participating in and/or volunteering at nearly every event.

Personal Statement

Transparency. We've all had the most success - at work, at home, with our kids' teachers - when everyone is communicating. Knowledge breeds trust. In my four years as a District 15 parent, I haven't heard any information coming out of our Community Education Council. In fact, I - and many parents - barely knew it existed until the vote to re-zone a few of our elementary schools. I believe that the re-zoning was ultimately the right thing for the district, but - like others - I was surprised that an all-but-invisible body would be granted approval rights. The CEC has insight into a lot that comes down from the City and the State - in particular the common core standards, and the formative/summative assessments that govern our children's progress against them. That's important stuff. I'd like to make sure we all know everything we can about it. About me: I'm a digital media professional, with experience leading teams at companies big (e.g., Disney) and small (e.g., my own start-up). My wife and I live in Windsor Terrace (home of Marty Markowitz, king of Kings County!) where both of our children attend PS 154. We're very active in the PTA. And - like many of you - we are very interested in our kids' education.

Candidate: Roklina Johnson

DBN: 15K051

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

MS 51 William Alexander Middle School - Parents Association PS 261 - PTA Learning Leaders Inc - Volunteer Tutor

Personal Statement

Candidate: Adam D. Wilson

DBN: 15K154

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I am a Member-at-Large of the PTA at PS 154 in Windsor Terrace. I volunteer at school events, attend PTA meetings, organize the first school-wide PTA event (the School Yard Jam) of the year. I am the father of an elementary school student at PS 154, and the step-father of a middle school student at MS 88. My family moved to Brooklyn in 2005, relocating due to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. As much as possible, I try to invest my time in civic oriented projects that matter to my neighborhood and local communities. For example, I have been active in neighborhood based hurricane recovery efforts, for both Hurricane Katrina and more recently Hurricane Sandy. I have been part of numerous community based efforts in support of disaster survivors, immigrant rights, workers rights, and the peace movement.

Personal Statement

Increasingly, parents and students are excluded from contributing to the success of New York City's schools. Regularly, I find myself in conversations with parents frustrated with their lack of voice in the schools their families attend. In District 15, we are blessed with many wonderful schools and school communities; we love our schools and our teachers. But during the four years my daughter has been a public school student, I have observed a disconnected education policy obsessed with "high stakes" testing, misguided attacks on the profession of teaching, and efforts to pit public schools against charter schools. We have not spent time addressing issues that matter to us: budget cuts that constrain our schools' ability to provide a full education to all students; increasing segregation of schools; and increasing inequality in resources available in our district's schools. I will advocate for education policy that encourages the broadest range of learning experiences that will allow students to thrive in a democracy, and our global society. I believe that District 15's parents, students, and community members want these issues to be front and center as we build the strongest public school system possible.

Candidate: Elena Romero

DBN: 15K094

IEP/ELL: IEP

Applicant Background

I was part of the NYC Mentoring Program from 2002-2003. I have served as an Academic Advisor for The City College of New York ((CCNY/CUNY)) since 2002. I advise both Liberal Arts and Early Childhood Education (ECE) undergraduate students. I have been a college educator for almost 11 years serving as an Adjunct Assistant Professor at The City College of New York and the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT/SUNY). I am knowledgeable of the Common Core Standards on the college level. I am the parent of an elementary student with a speech/language IEP since age 3.

Personal Statement

Elena Romero is a journalist, college educator, and author. Ms. Romero made her transition into academia in 2002 after serving as Associate Editor and Contributing Editor for fashion bibles DNR (defunct) and Women's Wear Daily (WWD). She teaches a myriad of media courses as Adjunct Assistant Professor at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT/SUNY) and The City College of New York Center for Worker Education (CCNY/CUNY). Ms. Romero is the author of *Free Stylin': How Hip Hop Changed the Fashion Industry* (Praeger, 2012). Her journalistic excellence and contributions to fashion journalism were recognized with an Urban Fashion Journalism Award at the Urban Fashion Awards Show at Lincoln Center in 2002. Ms. Romero is a recipient of the 2011 Colin Powell Center for Policy Studies at The City College of New York's Faculty Leadership Award. She holds a B.A. in Journalism and Mass Communications and an M.S. in Publishing, both from New York University. A native New Yorker of Puerto Rican ancestry, Ms. Romero resides in Brooklyn with her three daughters.

Candidate: Michelle Marie Kupper

DBN: 15K029

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

Class parent. Volunteer at my kids' schools - fundraising and other events. Co-founder of Committee on High-Stakes Testing at PS 29. Organized and served as moderator for a panel of teachers talking to parent community about the effect that testing is having on education. Attend other meetings/town halls across the district on public school issues. Involved with Women for de Blasio. Worked at petition table. Earlier work includes MEDICO, AmeriCorps (early literacy programs), Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

Personal Statement

Parents' voices are critical in regards to our children's education. I will work to hear from parents and represent them across the district. Schools are facing major issues, including 1.) excessive focus on high-stakes testing, 2.) the privatization movement and 3.) teacher and school evaluation systems. I am deeply concerned about the toll that these dynamics are taking on the climate of our schools. I believe in the goals of public education, and I will make every effort to strengthen the public sphere and to work toward the common good. We do not need to be steamrolled by so-called "progress" when we know it is not in the best interest of our kids. I have a PhD in sociology of education, and I have engaged in work on issues of race and social class diversity, which would serve me well in working with a diverse set of schools. I also hold a Bachelor's in elementary and special education. I have the passion and the time to devote to improving communication between parents and the DOE. My children are 3 and 6, so I see my role in educational issues as long-term on a personal level. More importantly, my role is long-term on a public level, as I believe that we need to stand up not only for our own children but for all children.

Candidate: Rachel Porter

DBN: 15K261

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I am a current member of the D15 CEC and an active member of my children's public school parent organization. I am also a Learning Leader at PS261.

Personal Statement

I am a social scientist and bring a policy-oriented researcher's perspective to my work on the CEC. I believe that all children should have a supportive, challenging and well-rounded school experience and I plan to continue to work towards this end if re-elected to serve on the CEC.

Candidate: Corinthia Carter

DBN: 15K038

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

In previous years I have served on two different PTAs totaling 5 years (all positions from treasurer to president). I am currently a mentor for young mothers and have recently been asked to join P.S.38's Student Leadership Team. I am actively involved in my sons' schools especially P.S.38 as I am currently co-chair of the PTA's library committee. We are working to reopen the library which has been closed for over 7 years.

Personal Statement

I am a mother of four sons, three of them currently attend both traditional public schools (one at P.S. 38 and another in a specialized high school) and a public charter school. I strongly believe in the importance of a good education and the lasting impact it can have on one's life. I also believe that in order for children to be truly successful during their academic pursuits there must be a strong partnership between parents and teachers. I am currently pursuing my second masters degree and currently work as a graduate assistant at LIU-Brooklyn's School of Education.

Candidate: Melanie Cohn

DBN: 15K010

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I work with the local arts council in Staten Island, and have been very active in working with the Center for Arts Education and teaching artists who work in schools during school hours and in after school programs. These classes are held with general education students and with special need students, in various school districts in Staten Island. As a Brooklyn parent, I have attended PTA and special school meetings and been involved with fundraisers for my specific school, PS 10 Magnet School of Math, Science, and Design Technology. I am also a member of the Rotary Club, a civic organization.

Personal Statement

I believe that public schools are one of the most visible and important intersections between the life of a child, the general public, and city government. As a parent, a life-long learner, and someone who understands the power of community engagement, I believe having the opportunity to serve on a city education policy advisory body is an important responsibility. I would like to offer my time and abilities to help my district CEC to meet its roles in helping shape education policies for NYC's public schools.

Candidate: Jason Matthew Gromek

DBN: 15K321

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I'm currently spearheading a preschool initiative at our church on 7th Avenue. We have an English basement of roughly 5,000 sq ft that needs to be renovated and will provide space for about 50 students. Construction will begin by the end of 2013, and we expect to open our doors in January 2015.

Personal Statement

I'm a huge proponent of a strong public education system, as it is the cornerstone of a meritocratic society in which all people have the opportunity to strive and achieve. Active parental involvement is critical to ensuring a quality education for our children. I witnessed this firsthand growing up, as my mother served on the local school board for 8 years. I decided back then that I would try to serve in a similar role for my children and their peers. While attending the re-zoning meetings, I learned that a long-time friend of ours has served on the CEC for many years. We had a number of conversations about the role of the CEC and her experiences. She is not eligible for re-election because her son is in high school, and she has strongly encouraged me to run, based on our work together on other committees. I think the opportunity is a good fit between the needs of the CEC and my skill set, and I hope I have the chance to serve on the Council.

Candidate: Abdul Sattar

DBN: 15K088; 15K230

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

Personal Statement

Candidate: Marci Jo Aronovitz

DBN: 15K107

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I have worked in the public sector for over 15 years. I have worked as a program analyst and auditor for the County of Los Angeles to improve the efficacy and efficiency of government services including the delivery of special services to children and their families. I have also worked as a senior program officer responsible for designing and implementing programs for a non-profit organization in Los Angeles

County dedicated to the health and well-being of children 0-5 and their families. In this capacity I was responsible for engaging the community to determine their priorities and interests for improving early care and education access and availability in their communities. I have worked with a myriad of early care and education providers to determine best practices and honed my communication and policy development skills working with local and state policy makers to create policies and feasible solutions to further expand quality care early care and education. More recently I worked with a private consulting firm as a Policy Strategist aimed at assisting our clients develop solutions to avoid conflict, improve communications and develop policies to help them achieve success.

Personal Statement

I am a new resident of Brooklyn this year having moved from Los Angeles, California. I bring with me, my passion for public education and ensuring that it remains a viable and competitive system to equip our young children with the skills and education necessary for achieving in a global economy. I have worked for over 15 years in the public sector, primarily in the area of early care and education policy and advocacy, working to develop education programs and policies to improve quality and access for communities. I am interested in providing my analytical skills, policy expertise and great passion to maintaining the high standards set in district 15 and helping to improve Brooklyn public schools. I have two daughters who are currently enrolled in PS107 and welcome the opportunity to contribute to the success of our new community.

Candidate: Sara Monsonis

DBN: 15K321

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I was on the PTA as Treasurer where my son attended Pre-K and Kindergarten last year. I also did my Field Placement for my MSW at a high school in downtown Brooklyn last year as a social worker, so I have spend time in both elementary and high school.

Personal Statement

Although I am new to the New York City Public education system, having one child who is in first grade, I have been very involved in the (almost) three years as much as I can. In Pre-K and K we were in another school because of the lottery, and I was at school every day. Whether it was being a chaperon on school trips, teaching the cook shop workshops, or helping the teacher, it seemed I was always at school. This year I am new at 321, but I feel like I'm doing my part. I volunteer where I can and feel like I'm always offering a hand. Next year will bring my last 500 hours of Field Placement work for my MSW, so I won't have as much time as I would like to pop into school during the day, but I am dedicated to this school and I am interested in the work the CEC does. I have plenty of time for monthly meetings and can be flexible with more time commitments as needed. I am invested in public education and our neighborhood, I love working with people towards a common goal, and I would love to be considered for the CEC. I appreciate the opportunity to participate in being a part of as many aspects as I can of the public school system, and I'm sure this will be a rewarding and empowering experience. Thank you!

Candidate: Diane Weiner

DBN: 15K321

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

Was the Early Childhood Committee Chair for 2 years at Congregation Beth Elohim Pre-school

Personal Statement

Candidate: Cindy Caplan

DBN: 15K321

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

I am currently finishing my final year as a member of the PS 321 School Leadership Team (SLT). I am also actively involved at 321 as a 'learning friend' (which allows me to work one-on-one with children who need extra help with reading or math), leading after school activity programs ("fantastic fitness"), helping to organize the school's "Arts Party" (which raises funds for public school arts programs), and regularly volunteer in my daughters' classrooms. My volunteer work extends beyond PS 321 and in the last few years I have organized our firm's internship program through Legal Outreach, mentored high school students at the Urban Assembly School for Law and Justice, and have helped out at our local synagogue (Congregation Beth Elohim).

Personal Statement

I am running for the District 15 Community Education Council (CEC) because I want parents' voices to be heard and considered when decisions are made that impact our children's education. I am the mother of two daughters attending PS 321 and while I believe deeply in the values and benefits of public school education, I also know how complicated and overwhelming the public school system can be. My goal is to understand these complex issues, inform parents about them, and use the CEC as a platform to share our community's thoughts, ideas and concerns. I am an employment lawyer currently "sharing a job," which means that I work as a lawyer three days a week and work as a mom two days a week. The balance this arrangement affords is priceless, and it has allowed me to get actively involved at PS 321. I am currently finishing my final year as a member of the SLT, where we have addressed many tough issues, including testing, budget cuts, rezoning, inclusion, and gentrification issues. I was born in Montreal, Canada, and moved to New York with my husband (a fellow Canadian) in 1999. We have lived in Brooklyn since 2003 and there is no place I love more in this world.

Candidate: Naila Rosario

DBN: 15K172

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

Member of School Leadership Team, current member of CEC15 and PTA co-president at PS 172.

Personal Statement

As a current member of CEC15 I know the importance of parent involvement in our schools. In the past two years I have been able to engage families in ways that improve learning and support parent involvement at home and school. When schools build partnerships with families that respond to parent concerns, honor their contributions, and share decision-making responsibilities, they are able to make connections that are aimed at improving student achievement. Ultimately, I care about student achievement. I feel that the best way we can help our children is having schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning.

Candidate: Amanda Marquez Bradshaw

DBN: 15K001

IEP/ELL: IEP

Applicant Background

I have volunteered my spare time coordinating trips and movie nights for various charter schools. I have also participated in an event held at CCUNY March 23, 2013 for Sea Cadets. A competition in the pool with sea perches and Navy Seals along with Navy reservists participating their support. I also plan on continuing time spent with Sea Cadets to prepare them for drill off competitions at Tilden H.S. in the near future.

Personal Statement

Actively attending college in pursuit of a degree.

Candidate: Carisma Koenig

DBN: 15K321

IEP/ELL: N/A

Applicant Background

Personal Statement

I am a practicing architect and graduate level architectural educator. My professional career has focused on work in Higher Education, working with administrators, faculty and students to help shape and design their environments. As an architect my experience on a range of academic spaces has provided a window into what produces today's college students. For example, when collaborating with students on the design of academic classroom buildings, they reveal their educational histories and in turn those policies which have conditioned them. The environment should support how students learn and study. It is crucial to their development as students for future fulfillment. I am also a parent of a fifth grader who is finishing elementary school and is about to enter middle school. I am decidedly committed to the New York City public school system. I would like to be a part of the process that participates and contributes in building a strong and solid public school system.

Candidate: Rosalina Diaz

DBN: 15K107

IEP/ELL: IEP

Applicant Background

I taught for 15 years for the Department of Education at the secondary level, interdisciplinary Social Studies and English. At present I teach Education at a CUNY College full-time.

Personal Statement

As a former NYC school teacher and a current Education professor for the City University of New York, I feel I have extensive knowledge about educational policies, processes, procedures and history. Additionally as a mother of two girls who have been through the New York City school system and graduated successfully, and two others who are currently in the system, I am invested in providing support for it's successful continuation and improvement. At this juncture of my life, I feel that I would like to put my knowledge and experience to productive use, by participating in an inclusive and collaborative process that values the input of parents, teachers and administrators alike, in improving the quality of education we are able to offer our children. I feel my qualifications make me a strong candidate for this position and I am committed the concept of service to my community.