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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 10, 2017

N-22, 2016-17

**CHANCELLOR FARIÑA ANNOUNCES THE 2017 COMMUNITY AND CITYWIDE EDUCATION COUNCIL ELECTIONS**

*District and Citywide Councils offer Parents an Opportunity to Shape Education Policy*

*325 Seats are Open for Election; All Parents are Encouraged to Run for a Seat*

NEW YORK – New York City Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña today announced the beginning of the 2017 Community and Citywide Education Council election cycle and encouraged all public school parents to consider running for a seat so they can make a significant impact on their child’s education and become a champion for school communities. The application period begins on February 9 and a citywide effort starts today to recruit eligible parents. Parents interested in becoming members of a Community or Citywide Education Council should visit [NYCParentLeaders.org](http://nycparentleaders.org/) for more information.

“Community and Citywide Education Councils offer parents an opportunity to make a long-lasting impact in the education of their children and thousands of other children in their community,” said **Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña**. “I encourage every parent to consider applying for a Council seat regardless of the language they speak or where they live, and to help other families get involved, gain invaluable knowledge, and strengthen family and community ties along the way.”

Community and Citywide Education Council elections take place every two years. During the last election in 2015, the number of parents who ran for council seats soared compared to previous years. The DOE’s *Raise Your Hand* campaign led to 1,290 parents applying for Community and Citywide Education Councils, up from 729 in 2013 and 511 in 2011. *The Raise Your Hand* campaign was a citywide effort to inform all parents of these leadership roles, reflecting the Chancellor’s ongoing commitment to collaborating with families in the important work of ensuring students receive an excellent and equitable education.

There are 36 Councils across the City, including 32 Community Education Councils (CECs), the Citywide Council on High Schools, the Citywide Council on English Language Learners, the Citywide Council on Special Education, and the Citywide Council for District 75. The 32 CECs are responsible for approving school zoning lines, holding hearings on the capital plan, and providing input on instructional and policy issues.  Citywide Councils advise on and advocate for school policy affecting the specific needs of the students they represent. Each applicant for a CEC position must be a parent of a student enrolled in a district elementary or middle school [K-8], while applicants for the Citywide Council on High Schools must have a child in high school. Eligible applicants for the other three Citywide Councils must have a student receiving the respective services and programs. Parents serve two-year terms.

Parents interested in learning more about the roles and responsibilities of the Community and Citywide Education Councils should attend an information session. The first of a series of information sessions will take place at the Tweed Courthouse on February 13 at 6 p.m.

Between March 20 and April 21, Presidents’ Councils in each district will host forums for candidates to engage parents and parent leaders. Officers of each school’s parent or parent-teacher association will cast their ballots online between April 23 and May 9. On May 15, the results will be posted online at [NYCParentLeaders.org](http://www.NYCParentLeaders.org). The newly elected Education Council members will attend trainings and ongoing leadership development sessions on their roles and responsibilities. Trainings will be organized by the Division of Family and Community Engagement.

“All parents should have a chance to engage with school governance and have a voice in decisions that directly impact their children,” said **Public Advocate Letitia James**. “Community and Citywide Education Councils give parents an invaluable opportunity to work directly with superintendents and other DOE personnel on a range of issues including schools budgets, facility improvements, and education policy. I encourage all parents to apply for CCECs to ensure that our schools provide environments conducive to learning and foster our student’s growth.”

“Parents are essential partners in their children’s education and the Community and Citywide Education Council elections bring an important opportunity for parents to become leaders and advocates for their school communities,” said **Yolanda Torres Executive Superintendent of the Division of Family and Community Engagement**. “The parent voice matters. I encourage all parents to apply for a seat.”

“As a parent of a public school student, I know how important it is to be involved in your child’s education,” said **Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan.** “Community and Citywide Education Councils are a great asset and provide a forum to allow parents to have a seat at the table when discussing these very important educational issues.”

In addition, the Borough Presidents each make appointments to the CECs in their borough, and the Public Advocate makes appointments to the citywide councils. Appointed members also serve two year terms.

“I urge all public school parents to consider running for a Community and Citywide Education Council seat,” said **NYC Council Education Committee Chairperson Daniel Dromm**. “By serving on a CEC, parents have the opportunity to shape both New York education policy and their child's future.  As a former teacher, I have seen the tremendous positive impact parents can have on our students' learning and schools.  I hope that many will avail themselves of this exciting opportunity.”

“I welcome the beginning of the 2017 Community and Citywide Education Council election cycle, said **Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.** “I encourage all parents to participate and lend their voice to helping our students strive for both excellence in education and opportunities to improve their lives by running for a CEC seat.”

“I encourage parents to take advantage of every avenue there is to be engaged in their children’s educational futures, and one of the best ways to do that is by serving on a Community Education Council,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams. “**Parental voice and perspective is important to ensuring our students have strong advocates both inside and outside the classroom, receiving all of the services and support they need to succeed.”

"The Community Education Councils are our local school boards, and New Yorkers who volunteer to serve play a pivotal role in shaping our schools both today and for years to come," said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. "Volunteer position or not, it's hard to think of a more important and rewarding job, and I encourage all New Yorkers who are interested in serving to attend an information session and strongly consider applying."

“CECs are meant to ensure parental input in our school system,” said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz. “**It is critical to have parents be an integral part of the decision-making process to shape and set education policies. As a mom of two young boys, I can attest firsthand to the impact that parental involvement has on our education system. Queens parents are some of the most active, vocal and effective in the city, and the difference is clear. The nexus of collaboration between families, educators and surrounding community is the key to the success of our schools.”

“I am a staunch advocate for civic engagement,” said **Staten Island Borough President James Oddo.** “The CEC is a key vehicle for parents to be involved in their child’s education. I encourage those parents who want to be involved to consider sharing their abilities by running for the CEC.”

“We encourage all parents to consider running for their Educational Councils,” said **Nancy Northrop, Co-Chair of Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council**. “Strong Education Councils with dedicated parent leaders can make a substantial difference in communities across New York City.  An effective council can promote student achievement, ensure resources get to the schools most in need, and act as an important voice for all parents in their community.”

“Serving on a Community or Citywide Education Council is a great opportunity for parents to get involved in their children’s education and advocate on behalf of their entire school community,” said **Melanie Mendonca, Co-Chair of the Education Consortium Council and CEC 23 President.** “We need more active and engaged parents to assume these important roles, which are vital to building capacity and collaboration among families and schools.”

The DOE continues to provide targeted services and resources to further engage families across the City. Parent Conferences in native languages are being held for families in Mandarin, Spanish, Arabic and Bengali. Moreover, last school year, the Translation and Interpretation Unit expanded language access services with the creation of new positions at the Borough Field Support Centers to ensure that schools are providing families with limited English proficiency full access to language services. The expansion also included an increase in the translation and interpretation services for Community and Citywide Education Councils, as well as access to over-the-phone interpreters for schools at any time. In addition, the DOE is spearheading significant initiatives to help families and students prepare for the college application process, including the elimination of the CUNY application fee for low-income students applying for college, and for the first time this school year all juniors will take the SAT free of charge during the day.

For more information, parents can visit [NYCParentLeaders.org](http://nycparentleaders.org/) to learn more about the structure and roles of the Education Councils. This website includes information on eligibility guidelines, key dates, and frequently asked questions.

**The Councils**

Community Education Councils (CEC)
The CECs work closely with the district superintendents, approve school zoning lines, hold hearings on the capital plan, and provide input on instructional and policy issues. Each CEC has nine members who are, or were at the time of election, parents of students in grades K-8 in district schools, and two Borough President appointees.

Citywide Council on High Schools (CCHS)
The CCHS advises on education policy and issues involving high school students. The CCHS has 10 elected members, two from each borough, who must be the parents of students currently attending a public high school. Three members are appointed.

Citywide Council on English Language Learners (CCELL)
The CCELL advises on education policy and issues involving students in bilingual or English as a New Language (ENL) programs. The CCELL has nine elected members, who must be parents of students currently or recently classified by the DOE as English Language Learners. Two members are appointed.

Citywide Council on Special Education (CCSE)
The CCSE advises on education policy and services for students with disabilities. The CCSE has nine elected members, who must be parents of students receiving special education services paid for by the DOE. Two members are appointed.

Citywide Council for District 75 (CCD75)
The CCD75 advises on education policy and services for students with disabilities who attend a D75 program. The CCD75 has nine elected members, who must be parents of students in a D75 program. Two members are appointed.

*For more information about appointed members visit* [*http://nycparentleaders.org/citywide-education-councils.html*](http://nycparentleaders.org/citywide-education-councils.html)

**Selection Process Schedule**

February 9 - March 5 – Parents interested in running for a seat on a Council submit an application online (computers will be available at schools and libraries).

March 20 - April 21 – Presidents’ Councils, with the support of the DOE, host forums for parents to meet and ask questions of Council candidates.

April 23 - May 9 – Presidents, Treasurers, and Recording Secretaries of Parent Associations and Parent-Teacher Associations vote for the new Community and Citywide Education Council Members for the 2017-2019 term.

May 15 – The results are published on [NYCParentLeaders.org](http://nycparentleaders.org/).

July 1– Elected and appointed Community and Citywide Education Council Members for the 2017-2019 term take office.

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