

### Council Officers

**President** Stephen Stowe

**First Vice President** John Ricottone

**Second Vice President** Elizabeth Chan (IEP Rep)

**Recording Secretary** Kevin Zhao

**Treasurer** Meifang (Junmi) Chen



### Council Members

Wenming (Angie) Chen

Yanqing (Angi) Chen

Alina Lewis

Ryan Li (Student Rep)

Sabrina McNamara (D75 Rep)

Fabiola Mendieta-Cuapio (BP Rep)

Maya Rozenblat (ELL Rep)

Tamara Stern (BP Rep)

Resolution 5 (SY24-25)

## **RESOLUTION TO DEMAND REFORM OF EDUCATION COUNCIL ELECTIONS AND THE OFFICE OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (FACE)**

**Approved by a vote of 11 Yes and 1 Absent on May 14, 2025**

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>1. Stephen Stowe - Yes</b>        | <b>7. Yanqing (Angi) Chen - Yes</b>      |
| <b>2. John Ricottone - Yes</b>       | <b>8. Alina Lewis - Yes</b>              |
| <b>3. Elizabeth Chan - Yes</b>       | <b>9. Sabrina McNamara - Absent</b>      |
| <b>4. Kevin Zhao - Yes</b>           | <b>10. Maya Rozenblat - Yes</b>          |
| <b>5. Meifang (Junmi) Chen - Yes</b> | <b>11. Tamara Stern - Yes</b>            |
| <b>6. Wenming (Angie) Chen - Yes</b> | <b>12. Fabiola Mendieta-Cuapio - Yes</b> |

**Sponsors: Stephen Stowe**

**Co-sponsors: John Ricottone, Mei Fang Chen, Yanqing Chen, Fabiola Mendieta-Cuapio**

**WHEREAS**, the Community and Citywide Education Council elections represent a critical opportunity for parent and community voice in school governance<sup>1</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Education's Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) has been entrusted with administering the education council elections and historically provided a multi-million dollar budget (\$3.6 million in 2021 and \$4.3 million in 2023)<sup>2</sup> allocated specifically for this purpose; and

<sup>1</sup> The Morning Bell. (2025, Apr 29). Schools chancellor melissa aviles-ramos celebrates next phase for community and citywide education council elections. <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/home/2025/04/29/schools-chancellor-melissa-aviles-ramos-celebrates-next-phase-for-community-and-citywide-education-councils-elections>

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1

**WHEREAS**, FACE demonstrated poor planning for the 2025 Elections by establishing an Election Working Group but only convening its first meeting in December 2024, barely one month before the Application Period was scheduled to begin on January 13th, 2025; and

**WHEREAS**, FACE extended the Application Period arbitrarily, raising significant concerns about the adherence to rules, policies, and governance standards by FACE for the election; and

**WHEREAS**, FACE did not publish all Candidate Forum videos prior to the start of voting and in some cases published the wrong video with the wrong Council denying some candidates equal access to share their views with the voters in a timely manner<sup>3</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, FACE permitted at least one candidate to participate in multiple forums for the same Council, providing unfair additional time and exposure that was not afforded to all candidates<sup>4</sup>. FACE further compounded the problem by removing the video of one of these Candidate Forums for a full 10 days, purportedly to remove the portion with the candidate, but in reality representing an extraordinarily long time to perform such a procedure and depriving the candidates of the forum from equal exposure with those in the forum which remained online; and

**WHEREAS**, FACE listed candidates on the ballots in inconsistent and confusing ways with some candidates listed by first name first, others by last name first, and ones with middle names had those placed arbitrarily either after the first name or before the last name, and FACE failed to use commas to help voters understand the name order as is standard grammar, causing significant confusion; and

**WHEREAS**, FACE was forced to suspend voting citywide immediately after launching the election due to widespread errors on ballots, including missing candidates and candidates appearing on ballots for incorrect Councils<sup>5</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, FACE failed to clearly communicate to parents who had already cast votes whether their ballots would be counted or if they would need to vote again following the suspension; and

**WHEREAS**, after taking a full day to address reported issues, FACE relaunched voting only to acknowledge, after significant delay, that significant errors persisted on the ballots; and

**WHEREAS**, FACE actually canceled the District 1 Election after more than one week of voting had already occurred, following multiple reports that a candidate remained missing from the ballot<sup>6</sup>, and asked District 1 parents to re-cast their votes; and

**WHEREAS**, FACE has failed to be transparent about how many parents voted prior to the cancellation and what process would be implemented to ensure those parents were properly notified of the need to vote again;

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<sup>3</sup> The video from the second Manhattan High Schools forum was not posted. Instead a video from the Bronx High School forum was posted under the Manhattan, forum 2 heading.

<sup>4</sup> The second Bronx High School forum was removed as a result of a candidate joining both forums.

<sup>5</sup> Elsen-Rooney, M. & Zimmer, A. (2025 Apr 25). 'Technical issues' take nyc parent elections offline on first day of voting. Chalkbeat.

<https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2025/04/25/parent-council-elections-offline-after-technical-problems-voting-system/>

<sup>6</sup> Bardolf, D. (2025, May 4). NYC parent council elections rife with problems, rule violations: 'staggering incompetence'. The New York Post.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/nyc-parent-council-elections-rife-with-problems-rule-violations-staggering-incompetence/ar-AA1E6f5l>

**WHEREAS**, FACE has enumerated numerous campaigning “guidelines” which are purportedly based on Chancellor’s Regulation D-130. In reality, the “guidelines” are published on an informational, non-legal website, raising legitimate questions as to the actual legality of such “guidelines”. Furthermore, FACE has not responded to complaints regarding the “guidelines”<sup>7</sup>, and;

**WHEREAS**, FACE has identified and has been individually calling candidates who have not voted to tell them to vote which represents a significant compromise of privacy in the election process and raises questions about what information FACE staff have access to and how that information is used; and

**WHEREAS**, the New York City Board of Elections routinely demonstrates the skill and capacity to conduct elections for public offices throughout the City without such significant incidents; and

**WHEREAS**, the persistent and systemic failures in FACE's administration of these elections undermines parent trust in the process and threatens to depress parent participation in school governance <sup>8 9</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, there is an inherent conflict of interest in having the Department of Education oversee an election for education councils which are intended to provide oversight of the DOE.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Community Education Council for District 20 condemns the Department of Education's Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) for its gross mismanagement of the 2025 Education Council Elections and demands that administration of the elections is transferred to the New York City Board of Elections.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, if the education council elections remain under the supervision of the Department of Education, the Community Education Council for District demands the following reforms:

- For the New York City Department of Education to replace FACE leadership with qualified individuals from outside the organization who possess demonstrated skill and experience managing organizations and conducting elections for public offices; and
- For the Department of Education to engage an external, independent auditor to verify that all votes have been properly gathered, recorded, stored, and counted prior to the release of any 2025 election results; and
- For the Department of Education to also include a review of prior education council elections conducted in 2021 and 2023 when considering reforms to the election process;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this resolution be transmitted to the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education, the Mayor of the City of New York, the Speaker of the New York City Council, the New York State Commissioner of Education, the Chairperson of the New York State Assembly Education Committee, the Chairperson of the New York State Senate Education Committee, and all other Education Councils.

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<sup>7</sup> In District 20, FACE did not respond to complaints that a parent organization was promoting an election candidate, a potential violation of the campaigning guidelines.

<sup>8</sup> Zimmer, A. (2024, Nov 22). NYC comptroller raises says ‘urgent need’ to fix school board election process before spring voting. Chalkbeat. <https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2024/11/22/nyc-comptroller-investigation-finds-problems-with-2023-community-education-council-elections/>

<sup>9</sup> Lin, S.B. (2023, Jun 22). NYC parents express doubts over education council results, demand independent audit from doe. AMNY. <https://www.amny.com/news/nyc-parents-doubts-election-council-results/>

## Appendix 1 - Email from FACE Senior Policy Advisor Daiana Iqbal to Citywide Council on High Schools President Debbie Kross

Fwd: FW: Follow up question on CEC Elections-UPDATE

On Tue, Aug 15, 2023 at 5:09 PM Iqbal Daiana <[DIqbal@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:DIqbal@schools.nyc.gov)> wrote:

Dear Debbie,

Thank you for your questions and for your patience as we gathered the information you requested. Please see below our answers and do not hesitate to reach out for clarification.

1. What was the total budget allocated and spent on this cycle of elections - broken down in categories including advertising and staffing - and compared to the number for the 2021 cycle.

**In 2021, we allocated \$4,385,475 and spent \$3,625,019.72 and in 2023, we allocated \$4,983,618 and spent \$4,296,919. This election cycle, \$1,738,224 were spent on advertising (including printing of banners, posters, postcards and postage)**

2. How many DOE employees were dedicated to the election organization, vetting and other activities - also with a comparison to 2021. How many external consultants were involved in the same?

**In 2021, there were two campaign co-managers, who worked full time on the elections, alongside 11 consultants; they were supported by other teams in the division and agency, including FACE, Marketing & Communications, DIIT. In 2023, we assigned 4 FACE staff, and hired 27 consultants; the campaign received support as needed from FACE teams, Marketing & Communication units and DIIT.**