

STRATEGY: Why and How Do We Engage Community Boards (CBs) and Community Education Councils (CECs)?

Politicians are interested in the big picture, and the most effective way to communicate with them is through unscripted, in-person conversation. **Community Boards and Community Education Councils, on the other hand, are interested in the details that affect their communities.** You know your school best, and as you approach your CB and CEC with your school's details, you are improving your relationship with the decision-makers in your neighborhood.

Community Education Councils

What Community Education Councils ("CECs") are deliberative bodies that help to shape educational policies and priorities in their districts. Their real power lies in zoning decisions of district lines. There are 32 CECs in New York City.

Who CEC members are parent volunteers who provide hands-on leadership and support for their community's public schools. Each CEC represents a Community School District that includes public elementary, intermediate, and junior high schools. Each CEC has 11 voting members including nine parents of students in public elementary, intermediate and/or junior high schools in the district. There are two additional voting members who are appointed by the borough presidents and must be residents of or own or operate a business in the district. A non-voting high school senior residing in the district and who is an elected student leader will be appointed by the community superintendent. Since 2005, parent selections and borough president appointments take place every two years.

How Parents of public school children can apply to be in their district's CEC. Legally, charter school parents are not allowed to join CECs (because by law a charter school is considered its own school district). In the past, the New York City Charter School Center sponsored legislation to change this.

Full list of contacts: www.schools.nyc.gov/

Community Boards

What Every neighborhood in NYC is represented by a Community Board. These Boards serve as a link between your community and the government, looking out for what's best for your neighborhood and advocating for your community's needs. It is an important body of community leaders with whom to build a relationship. Every CB has a District Manager who hires staff, runs the office, and creates procedures to ensure smooth execution of city services. Each CB also has an education committee; the Chair of this committee will serve as your first point of contact.

Full list of contacts: <http://www.nyc.gov/>

Here is an easy way to plan your outreach to your CB and CEC:

1. Prepare a one-page factsheet with basic details of your school (*see Outline below*). If you have never written a letter of introduction to your CB or CEC, now is the time to do so! Introduce yourself as the school leader, include the factsheet, and **attach your school's calendar. Invite your CB and CEC to any school functions open to the public.** If your school produces a regular newsletter, make sure that your CB and CEC receive it!
2. If you have never attended a CB or CEC meeting, attend one as an observer first, and meet some people while you're there.
3. Contact and request time on the CB's and CEC's agenda for an annual presentation (*see Appendix for CB contacts in your borough and neighborhood*). *The presentation need not be more than an expansion on your school's factsheet, so you can use the outline below for both.*

School Factsheet for CB and CEC Outreach: AN OUTLINE

- School name and brief school leader bio/introduction
- Founding year
- Current enrollment grades and planned grade buildout
- Facility status
- If colocated, list of colocated schools
- Test scores (if not written down, be prepared to discuss them)
- School's calendar
- School's schedule (highlight it if it is different from the district's), including first and last days, and school day hours
- Any unique features of your school (e.g.: rooftop garden; unique curriculum; volunteer days, etc.)
- Contact information for school leader and parent leader, if applicable