



COMMUNITY AND CITYWIDE EDUCATION ELECTIONS

POWERTOHEPARENTS.ORG

**Tollfree Hotline:
1-877-NYC-VOTE**

info@PowerToTheParents.org

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Media Contact:

Morgan Pehme

Tel. (646) 861-5048

press@powertotheparents.org

Every Public School Parent in NYC Encouraged To Run for Community & Citywide Education Councils

Department of Education Aggressively Recruiting Parents to Sign Up Online to Represent Their Kids, Community

If you are a public school parent in New York City, the Department of Education wants you! To run for your Community or Citywide Education Council, that is.

In an ambitious reinvention of the Community and Citywide Education Council (CEC) elections, the NYC Department of Education (DOE) is reaching out to public school parents across the five boroughs to encourage as many parents as possible to become candidates for their local CEC. The CECs, which replaced New York City's School Boards in 2004, are parental advisory boards – one for each of the City's 32 school districts – that meet with the district superintendent each month and advise the DOE on issues like zoning and instruction.

In response to parent feedback following the last set of elections in 2007, the DOE has simplified the process of becoming a candidate for the CEC by setting up the website *powertotheparents.org*. Parents can sign up online to run in a matter of minutes.

“We listened to the input of parents across the City, who said they wanted an easier, more accessible system to get involved in their children's education,” said New York City Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein. “We hope that *powertotheparents.org* will put to rest past reservations about running for the CEC and inspire more of our parents than ever to become candidates for these essential positions in deciding the policies of New York City's schools.”

Up until the March 14, 2009 registration deadline, every public school parent with a child in grades K-8 can register at *powertotheparents.org* to become a candidate for the CEC. In addition, parents of children in an NYC public high school can run for the Citywide Council on High Schools and parents of children in District 75 (Special Education) can run for the Citywide Council on Special Education. Only parents who work or do business with the DOE, who hold other elective office, or have been convicted of a felony are ineligible to run. Parents

currently serving as an officer on a Parent Teacher Association (PA/PTA) must step down before running for a CEC position.

The Department of Education has partnered with the New York City-based nonprofit organization Grassroots Initiative to make sure that parents who run for the CEC feel comfortable with the process and have all the information and support they need to be good candidates.

“Our job is to show parents that running for the CEC is not just worth their time, but it is also easier and more enjoyable than they might think,” said Jeff S. Merritt, Founder and President of Grassroots Initiative.

Parent members will be selected for the CEC through a two-step election process. In a historic step by the DOE, each household with a public school child may cast a single “straw vote” – or advisory vote – online at powertotheparents.org from April 6-12, 2009 for the candidates running for the CEC in their district. After the results of this “straw vote” are tabulated and posted online, the President, Secretary, and Treasurer of each school’s PA/PTA – collectively referred to as “Parent Selectors” – will cast their votes from May 12-14, 2009 to decide the official winners of the elections.

Both the new process of Internet voting and online registration were set in place based on suggestions from members of the Chancellor’s Parent Advisory Council (CPAC) and public school parents across the City, who provided recommendations as to how the CEC elections could be improved. In addition to creating a more democratic process, the CEC’s new state-of-the-art elections are more economically responsible too. The 2009 election will cost \$500,000, or 60 percent less than the \$1.3 million spent in 2007.

For more information about the elections or running for the CEC, log on to powertotheparents.org and call 1-877-NYC-VOTE.

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