

STATEMENT BY COUNCIL MEMBER GALE A. BREWER REGARDING THE ABHORRENT REMARKS BY PROFESSOR AT COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL MEETING 3 ON FEBRUARY 10, 2026

On February 10, 2026, I attended the CEC3 meeting in the auditorium at Joan of Arc campus on West 93 Street. I am often the only person in the audience at CEC 3 meetings, but this evening there were lots of people. I came in toward the middle of the meeting, and approximately 5 or 6 teenagers were speaking one by one about the need to retain their school – the Community Action School, which is located in the Joan of Arc campus. CAS is a wonderful middle school that I have supported since it was founded in 1994 by Principal John Curry. Principal Curry rode his bike to the school from New Jersey every day! Principal Andrew Sullivan took over as Principal in 2017 and has been equally inspiring. Many of the staff members have been with the students and the school for a long time; they are devoted to the mission – community-based learning. Students who have had concerns in other learning environments thrive at CAS, graduate with great success, and go to excellent high schools.

Each student who spoke – mostly of color – were prepared, articulate, and compassionate. I listened to each one as best as I could; they went to the front of the room to speak and address the audience, most of whom were parents from a variety of schools because CSD3 is considering moving students, moving another middle school, and closing CAS.

The students spoke passionately about the need to keep CAS open. They described how the school benefited them, how they enjoyed working with teachers and staff, and how they thrived at CAS. At one point, one of the students stopped speaking for a moment, turned around to look behind him, as if someone was talking over him, and then went back to finish his remarks. I believe he spoke while standing from his seat in the 2nd row. I assume he heard something that the rest of us did not. Now I assume it was the racist remark made by Professor Allyson Friedman, but it might also have been people on the zoom telling her to shut up. Ms. Friedman was on zoom so no one in the audience had any idea that she said the abhorrent remark.

There are many issues to address. Hunter College has put Professor Friedman on leave pending the investigation into her racist remarks, Chancellor Kamar Samuels is

rolling out an expanded Black History curriculum for more parents, more staff, and more schools. and CEC 3 has scheduled a special meeting on this topic.

I am urging the Dept of Education to UPDATE THE TECHNOLOGY AT CEC 3 AND ALL CECs. 1. The CAS students could barely be heard. Audience members who speak need a functioning microphone. 2. At CEC 3, the CEC members have laptop computers and can see those on zoom. Those of us in the audience cannot see what is on the zoom. In this auditorium, there is a screen above the stage which is cloth, I think, and I have never been able to see what is on it. The pictures are so light that they blend together. There is no voice. CEC 3 needs a large, real screen/monitor that is appropriate for viewing at meetings. 4. The Administrative Assistant needs to work with the OWL so that she can MUTE all those on zoom until they are called on to speak. She needs to have the technology to be able to do that; and the CEC needs the software that signs participants in who select to participate via zoom. The CEC needs to know who is speaking.

I am calling on the Dept. of Education to immediately upgrade the technology at CEC 3 and all CECs. I am also calling on the Dept. of Education to keep the Community Action School open.

Feb 26, 2026