FILED: NEW YORK COUNTY CLERK 07/26/2022 06:22 PM

NYSCEF DOC. NO. 34

INDEX NO. 155933/2022

RECEIVED NYSCEF: 07/26/2022

## **AFFIDAVIT OF CAMILLE CASARETTI**

| STATE OF NEW YORK | )      |
|-------------------|--------|
|                   | ) ss.: |
| COUNTY OF KINGS   | )      |

CAMILLE CASARETTI, being duly sworn, deposes, and states:

- 1. I am a member of Community Education Council ("CEC") District 15.
- 2. I have been a member of CEC District 15 ("CEC 15") for nearly eight years.
- 3. The Department of Education's ("DOE") engagement with CEC 15 has been severely lacking in that it does not actively seek community input or collaboration from CEC members.
- 4. The DOE does not reach out to CEC members for collaboration and input; rather, the DOE tells the CECs what the budget is.
- 5. Upon information and belief, at no time do the CECs receive budget information containing units of appropriation as required by state law.
- 6. During the budget presentations, whenever CEC 15 members have had questions, the DOE representatives giving the presentations are often unable to answer them and do not follow up with the members afterwards.
- 7. CEC 15 has attempted to reach out to the DOE to ensure our voices are heard, but our attempts have gone unanswered. For instance, CEC 15 passed a resolution on adjustments to Fair Student Funding weights in 2021, which was sent to the DOE that same year to no response, and then sent again in 2022 again, to no response. This resolution explained why and how we want to see a change in students' temporary housing. We even drafted a resolution to reflect our requests. *See* Exhibit 1. The resolution was emailed to the DOE. *See* Exhibit 2. But we never received a response to our resolution.

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8. The DOE is not clear with the CECs about crucial funding information. In the school system, every student is given a basic weight (e.g., \$15,000), which is the amount that the DOE predicts will be spent on that student during the fiscal year. Everything in the Fair Student Funding formula relates to the weight of each student; yet this entire system hinges on what "1" equals. The base dollar amount assigned to the weight of "1" has been increasing over the years due to inflation, but this year that weight was actually reduced. When the dollar amount of the base rate is cut, then every other weight will have fewer dollars attached to them. This is a crucial piece of information that is consistently withheld from the CECs; during my time on the CEC it has never been revealed during public hearings or the DOE's budget presentations. This speaks to an ongoing lack of transparency in how the DOE operates with CECs when it comes to school funding.

- 9. The culture surrounding how the DOE budgets are presented to the CECs has gone backwards ten steps during this current administration. This year, the "engagement" that the DOE has had with CEC 15 is not collaborative and is an entirely one-way process that does not allow for CEC 15 members to contribute to the budget discussions. Engagement with stakeholders would be evidenced in the changes made to the Fair Student Funding formula; however, the formula has remained unchanged for several years.
- 10. Furthermore, as a result of the FY23 budget cuts, CEC 15 schools have been impacted greatly. *See* Exhibit 3 (district 15 budget impacts for 2022-23 sent to CEC 15 compiled by a CEC 15 member dated June 24, 2022).

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Dated: July 26, 2022 New York, New York

CAMILLE CASARETTI

Sworn to before me this 26th day of July 2022

Notary Public

LAURA DAWN BARBIERI MOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF NEW YORK Registration No. 02BA6394203 Qualified in New York County Computesion Expires July 1, 2023

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