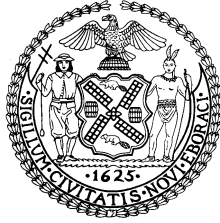


**Alida Camp**  
Chair

**Will Brightbill**  
District Manager



**505 Park Avenue**  
**Suite 620**  
**New York, N.Y. 10022**  
**(212) 758-4340**  
**(212) 758-4616 (Fax)**  
**www.cb8m.com Website**  
**info@cb8m.com - E-Mail**

**The City of New York**  
**Community Board 8 Manhattan**  
**Youth, Education & Libraries Committee**  
**Subject: Civics in the Classroom**  
**The Nightingale-Bamford School**  
**Monday, April 22, 2019**

*Please note: The resolutions contained in the committee minutes are recommendations submitted by the committee chair to the Community Board. At the monthly full board meeting, the resolutions are discussed and voted upon by all members of Community Board 8 Manhattan.*

**Minutes**

**Resolutions for Approval**

**Item 1: Unanimous**

CB8 Committee Attendees: Dori Newman (Session Co-Leader), Cece King (Session Co-Leader), Peter Patch (Committee Co-Chair), Ed Hartzog, Michael Hoffman (public member).

CB8 Members (Excused): Debbie Teitelbaum (Co-Chair), Sophia James

**Panelists:**

- **Caroline Friedman-Levy:** Ms. Friedman-Levy works at The Civics Center, an organization dedicated to building high school voter engagement.
- **Karla Modesto:** Ms. Modesto is a Program Associate at Generation Citizen, which works to ensure that every student in the US receives an effective action civics education.
- **Isabelle Russo (by phone):** Ms. Russo, a senior at the Spence School, has headed up all civic engagement activities at Spence, including the creation of an annual school-wide civic engagement conference.

Meeting called to order by session leaders Cece King & Dori Newman at 6:40pm.

**Principal Discussion Points:**

- Proposed approach: engage students in issues regarding civics as follows:
  - a. Students pick an issue that is important to them. Then take them through a discussion of how to address this issue, including (i) identifying root causes, (ii) defining policy-oriented goals, (iii) determining who the decision makers in this are, and (iv) preparing a presentation of their analysis.
  - b. The students then deliver their presentation to a panel of judges, who have expertise in related fields.
- The Civics Center: a California-based organization that focuses on voter registration and child welfare policy.
  - a. The aim of the Center is to promote and explain pre-registration, and conduct research on best practices in high school voter registration.

- b. The Center focuses on student voter registration in California, because the state allows pre-registration 16-18 years old, but many students are not aware of pre-registration.
  - c. The Center then aims to promote the program and approach across the nation, including 18 states that have early voter registration, with the objective of creating informed voters and promoting best practices.
- High School initiative: One participant (by phone), Isabel Russo, has led The Spence School in leading a high school civics club,
  - a. The project has been conducted working with the head of the school and the head of the history department.
  - b. The objective is to make the program interdisciplinary, for example, by exploring the chemistry and chemical reactions involved in water pollution in relation to the Flint, Michigan water crisis.
  - c. One session focused on how the government deals with issues regarding affordable housing and addressing minority group needs, through programs at the federal, state and local level, including the NYC agencies focused on housing.
  - d. Other areas of focus included a civic engagement conference on criminal justice reform, as well as examining the issues and process associated with creating their own bill, and going to the local office of the NY State Assembly representative.
- Other initiatives: To promote student civic engagement, initiatives proposed and/or led by CB8 members Cece King and Dori Newman include:
  - a. The poster competition and the public speaking competition,
  - b. Participating in activities including participatory budgeting, Model UN and Model Congress, and
  - c. Creating a community leadership program to address national and local public policy issues.
- The curriculum: how to define a civics curriculum, and what a ‘quality civics education’ looks like, raised such issues as:
  - a. Voter Pre-registration and voter participation rates (quite low in NY state),
  - b. Engaging children of all ages, including pre-school children, with the view that if a young person is not engaged in some fashion by their teenage years, their future level of participation and engagement will likely be low, and
  - c. Discussing an organization called KIDS VOTING USA, which has its own curriculum and is active in about 26 states, focusing mostly states that are not dominated by one political party.
- Curriculum philosophy: The curriculum should be established to engage students in examining issues, and research the facts about a given topic, without pushing a particular point of view or agenda. This can be achieved by giving the students the opportunity to lead the conversation or debate, rather than having a teacher take a dominant role in describing how the issue should be understood or addressed.

**Resolution regarding Civics Education in NYC:**

**WHEREAS** civics education is important for all citizens, and

**WHEREAS** Mayor De Blasio has proposed a program, ‘Civics for All,’ for the city,

**BE IT RESOLVED** that we propose that, in the City of New York,

(A) All schools, public and private, teach civics at every level - primary, middle and high school, and

(B) The subject of civics be put on the Regents Exam.

**In Favor:** Dori Newman, Cece King, Peter Patch, Ed Hartzog, Michael Hoffman (public member).

The resolution was **approved** by a vote of 5-0.

**Peter Patch and Debra Teitelbaum, Co-Chairs**