



July 8, 2020

Dear Parent Coordinators,

Thank you for your dedication to New York City families! I hope you find time to rest and relax this summer. The transition to remote learning was incredibly challenging, and you served as a critical support to families to ensure that no students were left behind. As we prepare for the 2020-21 school year, your support to families will be even more important. The public health crisis continues to peak nationally, and it is in that context that we are planning for school reopening in the fall. While schools will reopen, we will be implementing social distancing and other public health protocols that are necessary to ensure the health and safety of students and staff.

This summer, you will be our point of contact for leading your school's parent empowerment work. We need parent members of the SLT to participate in the planning process over the summer, and schools need to provide parents with regular updates about what to expect in the fall. We will provide you and your principal with a Parent Empowerment Toolkit for School Reopening that offers guidance on how to structure parent engagement over the summer.

If you have questions or would like support, please do not hesitate to reach out to your [Family Leadership Coordinator](#), [Family Support Coordinator](#) or [FACE Parent Empowerment Liaison](#).

Today, the Chancellor and Mayor announced the new split schedule program models that schools will choose from for the fall. It will be important to share that information with families, and explain that schools have not yet selected their model for next school year. Please consult with your principal to learn the process he or she will use to make determination on program model selection.

**Please reach out to your families this week to share these updates with them through calls and/or emails.** The most up-to-date information is available in the [School Building Reopening Plan](#). Below are the most important takeaways for you at this moment. *Please remind families that this guidance may change as the health landscape evolves.*

### **Overall Guidance**

- The 2020-21 school year will start in September 2020 (exact date is TBD as we are currently working on the 2020-21 school calendar).



- NYC students will be learning 5 days a week, whether in-person or at home.
- We are maximizing in-person instruction as much as possible given health and safety guidance. Students will return in either a blended learning model (a combination of remote learning and in-person instruction), or a fully remote learning model, if you so choose.
- Health officials have made clear that the following basic safety protocols are key to reducing the spread of COVID-19: social distancing, face coverings (masks), hand hygiene washing, and staying home when sick.
- We are currently assessing student busing and transportation options for fall 2020.

### **Developing Student Schedules**

It is clear that given the necessary health and safety requirements, we will not be able to have 100% of students present in a school building on any given day.

- Under the blended learning model, all students who wish to return to their building will be taught on-site in school for part of the week, and will attend school remotely on the other days of the week.
- Schools will contact families in August with student's definitive schedule. Schools will work with SLTs to choose a schedule from a limited number of models that take into account the space constraints of their individual building.
- Families can expect children to be in school at least one or two consistent days per week throughout the year. Schools will make every effort to safely conduct as much in-person instruction as possible.

Families can elect to choose all-remote learning for your child, and we will be following-up with more information on how they can submit their preference. The deadline for completing the form is August 7. There will be specific periods in the school year during which remote-only families may opt back into in-person learning.

### **New Health and Safety Protocols**

- All people in a school building should remain at least 6 feet apart at all times, including in classrooms, common areas, and during lunch periods.
- Face coverings will be required for all students, staff, and visitors while inside buildings. Disposable face coverings will be provided to students and staff who need them.
  - Exceptions will be made for those who cannot wear masks for developmental reasons, including based on their age.



- Students and staff will have increased access to handwashing and sanitizer. Schools will be supplied with additional cleaning supplies, including hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes, in addition to disposable face coverings to students and staff.
- All schools will identify a space to be equipped as an Isolation Room in the event a student or staff member becomes ill while at school.
- Our buildings will be deep-cleaned on a nightly basis with electrostatic disinfectant sprayers, and HVAC systems are being upgraded to ensure better ventilation.

### **Equitable Education: Now More Important Than Ever**

We are focused on delivering a high-quality, trauma-informed, purposeful education for every student this fall. We know that many of our families experienced trauma and loss related to COVID-19, and that the last few months have been difficult for all. As we return to school buildings, it is important to make space for these experiences, and to recognize that our “new normal” is not what any of us are used to.

- Teachers, staff, and students will have the time and supports they need to adjust to school and the necessary changes.
- Social-emotional learning and trauma-informed care will be integrated into school programming throughout the year, and all NYC public schools will have access to offer mental health support programs for the full 2020-21 school year.
- Students with disabilities will receive quality instruction and related services that will benefit them most. Students with 12-month IEPs who have elected to receive in-person services are receiving them during the summer. This fall we will continue to offer in-person services to all students with IEPs who opt to receive in-person services, to the greatest extent possible. The safety of our students and staff will be our top priority and we intend to continue to provide these services as long as we receive guidance that it is safe to do so.
- Due to COVID-19, multilingual learners were not given the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, (NYSESLAT), an annual exam that determines a student’s current level of proficiency in English. Multilingual learners are entitled to continue to receive targeted language supports and instruction, in-person or remotely, for the 2020-2021 school year. Schools will consider students’ current level of proficiency in English and home language to design and will receive an instructional program that will ensure continued progress in both their language development and content area knowledge.



### **Keeping Families Informed**

As we finalize plans for a school year like no other in our history, we know how important it is that our students, families, and staff have the information they need to prepare. For each piece of information we are providing, more questions can emerge. Please visit the Return to School 2020 webpage on a regular basis for the latest updates at [schools.nyc.gov/returntoschool2020](https://schools.nyc.gov/returntoschool2020).

In addition:

- Throughout the summer we will continue to engage with families, students, and community leaders—both centrally through the DOE and within each school community.
- DOE will host a series of Family & Student Information Sessions to answer family questions and concerns. The first session will be held on July 16.
- Specific guidance will be coming soon for families with children enrolled in CBO-based early childhood programs.
- DOE will convene community and advocate roundtable meetings, briefings with elected officials, Community Education Council leaders, and more.

At the onset of the public health crisis, we intuitively knew that our “normal” would be forever changed. We are here to support you as we move forward together and plan for school reopening.

Sincerely,

Donald Conyers  
Acting First Deputy Chancellor

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Adrienne Austin'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a light blue rectangular background.

Adrienne Austin  
Acting Deputy Chancellor  
Division of Community Empowerment, Partnerships, and Communications



**Department of  
Education**

Chancellor Richard A. Carranza