

February 11, 2021

Dear Families,

It is hard to believe we are already in the second half of this unusual school year. I am so grateful for your continued perseverance and flexibility during these difficult times, including the added challenges of our recent snowstorms.

Your voice and leadership are important, and I want to briefly share how you can use them to help our schools and students in a very important way. You can now apply to run for a seat in the coming election for Community and Citywide Education Councils. As a member of a Council, you are a voice for your community—and you can help make a direct impact on education policy. This includes through hosting Town Halls with me, collaborating with superintendents to improve student achievement, and advising on school building changes.

Each of the 32 geographic school districts has a Community Education Council, and there are four Citywide Councils: High Schools, English Language Learners, Special Education, and District 75. To apply to be a candidate for a council, simply log into your NYC Schools Account (NYCSA) to get started. If you don't have a NYCSA account, you can sign up for one at mystudent.nyc and then contact your parent coordinator to add your students. You can submit your application through **February 28**.

Later in the year, for the first time ever, parents and guardians with a child in a New York City public school will have the chance to vote for their preferred Community Education Council candidates and have a direct hand in shaping important decisions in our city. You need a NYCSA account to vote, so if you don't have one, again, please sign up at mystudent.nyc. Whether as a candidate or a voter, I very much hope you will take advantage of these opportunities to impact our schools.

In other news, I am excited to share that we will be reopening our middle schools for in-person learning on Thursday, **February 25**. We have developed strong practices to help keep school communities healthy and safe. If you have a student in grades 6-8 and selected blended learning, your child's principal will reach out with their new schedule. All schools will have 20 percent of students and staff randomly tested on a weekly basis. Students who have not already done so are required to provide consent for testing by their first scheduled in-person learning day in order to learn in person. I encourage families to submit consent through your NYC Schools Account prior to your child's first day of in-person learning.

And here's some good news for families currently applying to middle or high school: We're giving you more time to submit your applications. The new deadline to apply to middle school is **February 23** and the new deadline for eighth- and ninth-grade families to submit their high school application is **March 1**. As a reminder, you can apply one of three ways: online at MySchools.nyc, through your child's current school counselor, or through a Family Welcome Center (schools.nyc.gov/WelcomeCenters).

This is an exciting and important time in our schools, as together we celebrate both Black History Month and Respect for All Week. Our educators and students across the city are engaged in thoughtful exploration of these issues as they connect to our lives and our national experience. Having this conversation deepens our understanding of how we can make progress toward justice and fairness. You can find some great resources to help with these discussions on the DOE's official blog The Morning Bell at morningbellnyc.com/2021/commemorate-bhm and at morningbellnyc.com/2021/celebrate-rfa-week. You can also enroll in courses related to Black History Month on Parent University at parentu.schools.nyc

Thank you again for working alongside us as we educate your children. We know how important school is for your student, whether they are learning remotely or in person—and our dedication to them remains unwavering during this challenging time.

I hope you and your families enjoy the upcoming midwinter recess, **February 15–19**. And Happy Lunar New Year to those who celebrate on **February 12**!

Sincerely,



Richard A. Carranza
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education

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