

Dear District 3 Parents,

I write to you as Chancellor and as an experienced educator and, first and foremost, as a fellow parent and grandparent. Decisions about our children's education are at the core of who we are as parents and, fundamentally, we all want the same thing: a healthy, vibrant school where our children will thrive and grow, academically and socially.

The rezoning proposal that will be considered by Community Education Council 3 (CEC3), an elected body of District 3 parents, offers a rare opportunity to provide real benefits to a large number of schools in the community, benefits that will extend to your child and that I hope you will embrace.

While many schools are involved, very few current students in the district are directly affected. Students who already attend a school, and their younger siblings, have the right to continue attending their zoned school regardless of changes to school zones for new incoming students.

You may be wondering about the process for rezoning. Under state law, the superintendent makes a rezoning proposal. The CEC votes yes or no on the proposal. The CEC is the final decision-making body for questions of school zoning.

The current proposal was developed by the DOE, working with educators and the community. It results from extensive community engagement spanning multiple years. The superintendent, DOE staff, and CEC3 members attended more than 25 community meetings, seeking input all over the district and hearing from thousands of parents with a variety of viewpoints and perspectives.

The rezoning plan, along with concurrent proposals for building use changes, will create benefits for students across the district. Here are just a few of them:

- Brand new building for **PS 191** students at Riverside Center
  - Custom-designed new building with state of the art science lab and demo room, library, and music suite with classroom and practice rooms
  - New G&T program starting at grade three with an experienced teacher of gifted children
  - TERC math program, with emphasis on critical thinking and problem solving
  - Teachers College Writing Workshop, similar to the curriculum at PS 199
  - Cutting edge program blending science and art
- Room to grow for **PS 452**
  - Move PS 452 to the building where PS 191 is currently located
  - Expand enrollment by one to two sections per grade
  - Open pre-K sections
  - Room for related services and specialized instruction
- Ending severe overcrowding at **PS 199**
  - End to waitlists for zoned students
  - Return of art, science, music rooms
- Expanding programs at **PS 84**
  - Open pre-K sections
  - Expansion of popular French dual-language programming

- Moving **MS 247** Dual Language Middle School from PS 84 to the M044 building, giving three middle schools room to grow and flourish
- Keeping the G&T program at **PS 166**
- Ensuring **PS 75's** ability to continue existing high quality programs, including ASD-NEST and Spanish dual-language
- Preventing overcrowding at **PS 87**
- Merging **PS 241 and PS 76** to ensure a full academic program for all students

In addition to these very concrete benefits to thousands of students, there is the important added benefit of socioeconomically diversifying schools in the southern end of District 3. To be clear, our first and foremost job as educators is to ensure that every child has a great school to attend, regardless of where they live. Whenever we can achieve that goal *and also* support diverse learning communities, we owe it to our children to do so. The benefits of diversity are so clear for students. Studies consistently show real academic and social benefits of diversity, with no decrease in achievement for any group of students. In other words, more diverse schools are good for all children.

I know that some parents have questions about academics at PS 191. After 51 years in education, including many instances where I have been personally involved in school improvement efforts at the school level, I can honestly say that I have complete confidence that PS 191 is going to continue its extremely rapid improvement trajectory, and we at the DOE are committed to assisting this effort, with my personal attention. When I first became principal of PS 6 on Manhattan's Upper East Side, the school wasn't the top choice of many neighborhood parents. A short time later, it was oversubscribed. I was superintendent when PS 8 in Brooklyn Heights was in a similar situation; in the course of three short years PS 8 became a thriving school serving the whole community. At PS 166 here in District 3, improvement was equally rapid and today, PS 166 is a highly sought after school. Lauren Keville, the principal of PS 191, is a great instructional leader and she has charted a course to dramatically improve PS 191—a course that has already resulted in significant progress. In her short time there, Lauren has brought high quality curriculum—in math, the TERC program used in some of our highest performing schools; in literacy, Teacher's College Writer's Workshop; and a wonderful social-emotional learning program called Second Step that teaches empathy and prosocial skills. I urge you to visit PS 191 and talk to the principal, to teachers, and to parents. I am confident you will see what I see—a school on the cusp of greatness that can and will serve all its students beautifully. I recommend PS 191 without reservation.

Sometimes necessity leads to changes that ultimately benefit not just our children—though in this instance they clearly do that—but also our community and even the world. I applaud the CEC for its efforts on behalf of the students and families of District 3 and am confident that your child will benefit from this rezoning.

Sincerely,



Carmen Fariña  
Chancellor