

Pillars in Practice:

Chancellor's Guide to the 2014-15 School Year



Please use the following recommendations, aligned to my Four Pillars, to ensure that your students gain the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in college, careers, and beyond.



PILLAR 1:

Improve student achievement by providing high-quality instruction aligned to the Common Core State Standards

- Hold a welcome event to introduce guidance counselors and provide a letter clearly explaining schedules, regulations, and expectations.
- Ensure after-school programs are enrolled and provide programs in the arts, mentoring opportunities, mental health services, physical education, and tutoring.
- Ensure **arts instruction**, including public performance; offer portfolio preparation, if feasible. Share performances with feeder schools as an enrollment incentive.
- Encourage **student-led parent-teacher conferences**.
- Offer Saturday, 8+, or holiday programs for struggling students; include targeted interventions and fun activities.
- Emphasize writing across all content areas and display this work in your classrooms and hallways.
- Offer buddy classes to promote peer tutoring and mentoring between upper and lower grades.
- Organize Talent Fridays to showcase activities of special clubs or projects.
- Ensure your school offers opportunities for physical education.
- Involve your school in Teen Thursdays, a new middle school after-school program that enables students to experience museums.
- Schedule class trips that align with social studies and science content.
- Ensure all students with disabilities are receiving their IEP-mandated services and that IEPs provide access to the Common Core State Standards.
- Integrate technology into classrooms to prepare students for college and meaningful careers.
- Identify interventions for students who have struggled.
- Create a system for daily monitoring of discharges and new admissions during September and October.

If you're the principal of...

- An elementary school: emphasize Academic Intervention Services and targeted interventions such as **Great Leaps** and **Fundations**, and strong content areas focused on vocabulary, particularly in second grade.
- A middle school: ensure strong algebra and advanced programs to prepare students for more challenging high school courses.
- A high school: focus on college and workforce readiness; offer mentoring and academic support; inform students about advanced classes, internships, college application process, and opportunities for scholarships and financial aid.



PILLAR 2:

Restore dignity and respect to the craft of teaching and school leadership

- Meet with new staff; review key **Chancellor's Regulations**.
- Meet with your professional development (PD) committee to solidify PD plans for the school year.



PILLAR 2:

Restore dignity and respect to the craft of teaching and school leadership (continued)

- Offer professional development on working with and integrating students with IEPs; establish expectations for teacher collaboration and parent outreach in the IEP development process.
- Review and discuss the New York State Education Department's [Blueprint for English Language Learners Success](#) with teachers.
- Conduct professional development on [Part 154 regulations](#) regarding English Language Learners.
- Offer training on classroom management and [alternatives to discipline](#) for behavioral problems; stress strategies that enhance and reward positive behavior.
- Share school conduct contract highlighting community service and student leadership opportunities.
- Review your school's [guidance and school counseling](#) plan with all staff members to promote the importance of social and emotional support and how that aligns with your school-wide goals.
- Share administrative tasks with teachers through a distributive leadership model.
- Work with your Language Access Coordinator to provide written translation and oral interpretation services to parents with limited English proficiency.



PILLAR 3:

Engage parents and families in every aspect of school life

- Notify families about your school's start and end times via posters, email, website, and phone messaging.
- Inform families about the 40 minutes of parent time on Tuesdays and the two additional evenings of [parent-teacher conferences](#) in September and May this year.
- Hold curriculum night for families: provide welcome table and school information, introduce parent coordinator.
- Discuss the new State math and English test scores for grades 3-8.
- Work with your parent coordinator to ensure that parents understand the structure and processes for the School Leadership Team (SLT), and Parent Association or Parent-Teacher Association (PA/PTA).
- Utilize your parent coordinator to create parent programs based on needs assessment.
- Start a First Fridays tradition: welcome parents to visit classrooms on the first Friday of every month.
- Create a monthly school newsletter to keep parents up to date on school-based activities and citywide initiatives.
- Schedule November meetings by appointment to discuss issues related to respect and a supportive learning environment.
- Talk with members of your PTA/SLT before the first official meeting of the year to set expectations and provide support.



PILLAR 4:

Create new collaborative and innovative models

- For Community Schools, ensure partner organization's goals align with yours. Meet with SLT and parent groups to encourage parent voices in decision making and goal setting, especially for weekend activities.
- Visit another school to observe innovative practices.
- Partner with businesses and universities to establish a Career and Technical Education program in your school; offer blended use of technology, especially STEM and Smart Boards.
- Consider innovative models that meet the needs of all types of learners: students with disabilities, in general education, Gifted & Talented, English Language Learners, and students with multiple needs.
- For co-locations, develop a plan to share resources to create opportunities for students, such as Advanced Placement classes, open-access library during lunchtime, art, chorus, PSAL teams, clubs, debate team, or activities with community-based organizations.