

MAY 2016

PUBLIC SCHOOL PRESS

Latest News for Parents from the NYC Department of Education



Thank You, TEACHERS

May is National Teacher Appreciation Month, and throughout the month, New York City public schools are celebrating the incredible work that the City's 90,000+ teachers do on behalf of our students and communities. The NYC Department of Education kicked off the month with Teacher Appreciation Week during May 2-5, and schools throughout the City organized various special events, activities, and workshops in honor of our hardworking educators. Students from many schools, including P.S. 174 in Queens, wrote

hundreds of 'thank you' letters to their teachers, while others, such as students at the American Sign Language and English Secondary School, contributed towards the setup of 'appreciation lunches' for their teachers.

"We are who we are because of our teachers," said Chancellor Carmen Fariña at the start of Teacher Appreciation Week. "May is a time when school communities, parents, and families can thank teachers for their commitment to students. Thank

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you, teachers, for sharing your knowledge, talent, energy, and your spirit, every day, in your classrooms and schools. Thank you for teaching our students and guiding them with the life-changing education that they need and deserve.”

It is never too late to reach out to teachers, past and present, to show gratitude for their work. Whether it is through thoughtful gestures, home-baked treats, gifts, or heartfelt notes, there are many ways for administrators, colleagues, students, family members, and community partners to show their gratitude for our City’s teachers. Take a moment to thank the educators in your life who have

Teacher
Appreciation
week May 2-6



challenged, mentored, and inspired you and the people you love, join the conversation online using the #ThankATeacher tag, and visit our [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) pages to learn more about the great work our teachers do every day.

Last Chance to Register for

SUMMER IN THE CITY

With the summer season fast approaching, do not miss out on the opportunity to have your children placed into our Summer in the City (SITC) enrichment programs for students

who are not required to attend summer school. Now through June 10, families with students in grades 2-10 may still apply for lottery-based placement (with priority enrollment for Renewal School students in grades 2-7) into the DOE’s [Summer STEM](#) (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics) enrichment program. Likewise, Renewal school students in grades 8-11 who are on track to graduate will be able to apply to take summer classes via the [Renewal SITC](#) program that prepares students for college-level work.

To learn more about the DOE’s SITC enrichment options for non-mandated students, please visit our [website](#). Applications for both the [Summer STEM](#) and [Renewal SITC](#) programs are due by June 10.



Parent to Parent with Yolanda Torres

Executive Superintendent of the Division of Family and Community Engagement

Dear Parents:

As we celebrate National Teacher Appreciation Month, I want to join in the chorus of voices who are acknowledging our fiercely dedicated and talented City teachers. I would also like to add another group who deserve much gratitude – our principals.



This month, I made a visit to William Cullen Bryant High School in Queens and took part in an inspiring evening of events. I was greeted by Principal Namita Dwarka, who was a student and a teacher at Bryant High School before becoming a principal. In fact, all her family members attended Bryant, as well; talk about school spirit!

During my visit, the school was hosting a “Family Night,” and the evening featured a summary of the school’s academics, a mock trial and mystery-solving game, musical performances, dance routines, and workshops regarding topics such as scholarships, college experiences, and even special effects makeup preparation. There was truly something for everyone, and Bryant H.S. students were the driving force behind the activities. They showed tremendous leadership skills as they participated with a sense of ownership and pride over the events. It was easy to see how their collective energy and

commitment reflected Bryant H.S.’s greater mission: “The Relentless Quest for Excellence.” That mission includes ownership, wisdom, leadership and scholarship. (Acronym: OWLS.)

Education is a collaborative effort, and Bryant High School serves as an example of what we should all expect and work towards with our schools. The message here is that your voice matters. Your ideas, insights, and contributions help to weave the fabric of what parent engagement can truly be. Remember, your school is meant to be a safe haven, a place where you can share your concerns with your parent coordinator, guidance counselor, and principal. If you feel your school can do more to engage with families, please reach out to one of your elected parent leaders, and share your thoughts. Feel free to share the best practices of Bryant High School and use their model as a jumping off point. You are part of the solution. And if you are feeling positive about your school, please, reach out to thank your principal!

I thank you for the hard work you do as parents and members of your school community.

Let’s keep the conversation going.

Best,

Yolanda Torres

Get informed about all of the latest school news, events, and programs.

Visit schools.nyc.gov/subscribe to sign up to

PUBLIC SCHOOL PRESS

SIGN UP!

All It Takes Is to 'Just Say Hi'

Quick question: how do you start a conversation with someone who has a disability?

Give up?

It is quite simple, actually: Just say, 'hi.'

Over the past few years, the DOE has worked to develop and support inclusive school communities across the five boroughs, and this year, the Cerebral Palsy Foundation (CPF) and the DOE are working together to help New Yorkers of all ages to overcome their uncertainties when interacting with people who have disabilities. For people who do not communicate with others in typical ways, "Just say hi" is not just a group of words; it is an attitude. Saying "hi" marks the beginning of a new connection and relationship, and the DOE and CPF are teaming up to teach City students about the importance of building relationships with others who may seem different at first glance.

Chancellor Carmen Fariña, Deputy Chancellor Corinne Rello-Anselmi of the DOE's Division of Students with Disabilities, and Richard Ellenson, CEO of CPF, announced the DOE and CPF's new partnership during an event that took place at The Beacon School in Manhattan on May 2. The child-focused event, which featured a wonderful play called "Facebook Walls," by the talented student actors of [CUNY's CAT Youth Theatre](#), as well as an interview between Chancellor Fariña and Alex Brightman, the star of the hit Broadway show, "School of Rock," provided great examples of the kinds of activities that schools will be encouraged to organize over the next school year. As part of the DOE/CPF partnership, select schools will be asked to implement "Just Say Hi" inclusion initiatives that can take place in the classroom, throughout their schools, or in partnership with community organizations.



Schools will be able to work with the Child Study Center at New York University's Langone Medical Center to receive additional support, free of cost, to help develop inclusion-based initiatives and events.

"Life is about inclusion, and inclusion is about social connections," said Chancellor Fariña during her interview with Mr. Brightman. "Creating an inclusive environment is critical to ensuring students have the supports they need to learn and thrive," and the 'Just Say Hi' campaign will provide staff members and students with guidance about how to start important conversations with their classmates, and how to build on those initial exchanges."

The CAT Youth Theatre's, "Facebook Walls," is an especially great example of how to include students with disabilities into school productions and projects; the lead actor of the production is Thomas Ellenson, son of CPF CEO, Richard Ellenson. Thomas, who has cerebral palsy, uses an electronic speech device to communicate with others. For some, Thomas' speech



device, which allows him to communicate with others with preprogrammed buttons featuring custom phrases that are read aloud by a digital voice when pressed, could take a bit of patience and open-mindedness to get used to. Often when one communicates with Thomas and others with similar speech devices, conversations that can take mere seconds normally can take several minutes. "Facebook Walls," which is a one-act play that portrays how a student with disabilities deals with aspects of inclusion among his school friends, provides Thomas with an outstanding way to show others that once people get past the things that make us feel different, we can start to understand how we can work together towards common goals.

"Inclusion may seem daunting at first," said CAT Youth Theatre's Helen White, director and co-founder of the program, during the May 2 event. "But in fact, it brings new levels to our understanding of the human condition and has

helped us all see the ways we can work better together. Tom has been such an inspiration for all us, as we have seen how he has grown as an actor and as a young man. Everyone (in the CAT Youth Theatre program) loves Tom, and we are thrilled that the DOE is helping to share his message."

To review pictures, video, and tweets from the May 2 event at The Beacon School, visit the DOE's official [Storify post](#) about the event. Likewise, to learn more about CPFs work, including special "Just Say Hi" ads from celebrities like John Oliver and tech company CEOs, Tim Cook (Apple) and Satya Nadella (Microsoft), visit [CPF's website](#).



Dates to Remember

May 30: - Memorial Day (Schools closed)

June 1: – Regents Exams*

June 9: – Anniversary Day (No classes for students)

June 14: Clerical Day (No classes for elementary & middle school students); Regents Exams*

June 15-17: Regents Exams*

June 20-22: Regents Exams*

June 23: Regents Rating Day (No classes for high school students)

June 28: Last day of school for all students (Early dismissal)

*For more information regarding the New York State Education Department's June 2016 Regents Examination schedule, visit [NYSED's website](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/schedules/2016/regents-616rev.pdf). (<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/schedules/2016/regents-616rev.pdf>)

Citywide Parent Conference for ELLs

Tuesday, June 7

9 a.m.–1 p.m.
El Museo del Barrio
1239 Fifth Avenue
Manhattan



This event will provide parents and guardians of English Language Learners (ELLs) and former ELLs with valuable information and practical insights about the exciting learning opportunities available to their children in New York City during the summer. Families can register [here](#).

College Signing Day May 2

On May 2, thousands of the City's high school seniors celebrated College Signing Day, the DOE's official celebration of the college choices our graduating seniors have made after months of applications, exams, projects, interviews, and visits. Here are three of our graduating seniors who celebrated the occasion, and congratulations to all our students who have made their college decisions!



NYPD Officers Visit 360 Schools for First Ever

TEAM UP! TUESDAY



As part of our efforts to expand its already close partnership with the New York Police Department (NYPD), the DOE worked with the NYPD to establish the City's first-ever Team Up! Tuesday a teamwork and leadership initiative on May 17. During this event, officers from each of the City's 77 precincts visited 360 elementary schools throughout the City and engaged with students in a variety of activities that focused on teamwork and leadership in an effort to build meaningful relationships between schools, students, police officers, and local community members. Students were also able to hear directly from officers about their own experiences while learning about the importance of being strong community members. Even Chancellor

Fariña and NYPD Commissioner Bill Bratton joined in on the festivities!

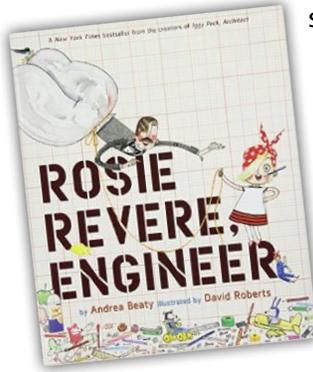
The following photos represent a small fraction of the great work that happened during TU!T; for photos like these and more, check out the DOE's [TU!T Storify](#) page.





Rosie Revere, Engineer

By Andrea Beaty, illustrated by David Roberts
(Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2013)



she herself never got to pilot a plane. Determined to fulfill her great aunt's wish, Rosie creates a heli-o-cheese-copter. To the child's dismay, the copter sputters, floats for a moment, and crashes to the ground.

"I failed," Rosie cries. But her great aunt sees it differently, telling the child: "Your brilliant first flop was

Rosie Revere dreams of becoming a great engineer. Alone in her attic at night, she creates gadgets and gizmos out of yarn, paper cups, screws, bolts, tin cans, and doll parts. Among her most prized inventions are a hot dog dispenser and a pair of helium pants. But when a hat she constructs from fan parts and cheddar cheese spray fails to impress her favorite uncle, the second grader shelves her invention—and her bold dreams. Then, her Great-Great-Aunt Rose comes for a visit, and teaches Rosie an important lesson about failure.

a raging success!" She hands Rosie a notebook containing illustrations of aircraft dating from 1784 through 1980, along with her handwritten notes describing women's "firsts" in aviation, including Élisabeth Thible's flight in a hot air balloon, Amelia Earhart's solo trip across the Atlantic Ocean, E. Lillian Todd's first airplane design, and Lynn Rippelmeyer's first time piloting a Boeing 747. Suddenly, all is clear to Rosie: "Life might have its failures, but this was not it. The only true failure can come if you quit."

As the title suggests, this book pays homage to Rosie the Riveter, the iconic star of the famous wartime poster that was used to raise the morale of American women working in factories during World War II. But the book communicates a more important message about trying and trying again. Rosie revisits her dream of becoming an inventor when her Great-Great-Aunt Rose comes to town. Rose once built airplanes but has one great regret:

Great-Great-Aunt Rose's sentiments provide a great example for all of us. Sometimes, when we dare to take a chance, we hit the sweet spot that otherwise would have eluded us. Other times, we crash to the ground, like Rosie's failed inventions. Instead of giving up, we must pick ourselves up, reflect on our failures, make tweaks, and try again. In the end, we must see our flops as opportunities to learn and grow

Let us all join Rosie Revere and dare to dream the bold dreams of great engineers, while keeping in mind that all is possible.

Join the online conversation:

 /nycschools or  /nycschools
schools.nyc.gov



Parent Leader Corner

It is election time for Parent Associations and Parent-Teacher Associations (PA/PTA). Given that the deadline for PA/PTAs to notify principals about their election plans has passed, we know that elections have been scheduled, and that Nominating Committees are already in full swing. Now it is time to get ready for the next steps in the election process.

The only three offices that must be filled for a PA/PTA to function are the president, recording secretary, and treasurer. Other offices, such as vice-president, are non-mandatory, and can be filled at the beginning of the next school year to allow incoming parents to run for them accordingly. With that said, please understand that PA/PTAs that opt to reserve non-mandatory positions for elections early next school year must identify the positions that are being reserved. Likewise, there should be a clear timeline for any delayed elections.

Once elections are completed, the election results must be certified. Before the election is adjourned, new officers must enter

their contact information onto an [Election Certification Form](#), which must then be signed by the school principal or the principal's designee. New officers must provide their contact information to their school's principal/parent coordinator within five days of their election.

It is extremely important that the contact information placed onto Election Certification Forms is accurate, as the mandatory officers that each PA/PTA elects for the coming year will have a vote during the upcoming Community Education Council (CEC) elections being held in each school district next year. Likewise, it is of utmost importance that each officer's information is input into the online system (SPLCI) accurately. This ensures that each school's mandatory officers gets contacted when the time comes to vote in CEC elections.

For more information about this and other PA/PTA concerns, please review our [Parent Leadership PA/PTA Election Guide](#).

What's Next: Sample PA/PTA Spring Election Timeline

Deadline/Timeframe	Task
At least 2 weeks before election	Submit election notice to principal/PC for distribution
At least 10 days before election	School distributes election notice to parents
By June 15	Hold election (This gives two week buffer, in case you need to reschedule, etc.)
Within 5 days of election	Submit election certification (with officer contact info) to principal