

JUNE 2015

PUBLIC SCHOOL PRESS

Latest News for Parents from the NYC Department of Education



New Online Tool Improves Parents' Access to Grades, Attendance, Test Scores

Attendance, classroom grades, and State exams are some of the most important measures of students' progress year to year. Now, parents have easier access to this information than ever before.

This month, the Department of Education launched NYC Schools

Account, a new online tool for parents to keep track of their child's grades, attendance, and home contact information, as well as State test scores once they are released later this summer.

Parents can sign up for an NYC Schools Account at mystudent.nyc using an email address,

their child's school identification number, and a unique access code, which will be backpacked home the last week of school. Families can find their child's ID number on report cards, and can also contact their school directly for this number, or if they need help logging into their NYC

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Schools Account.

NYC Schools Account features a number of improvements over its predecessor, ARIS, which was used by families from 2007 through this past December. Parents can now log in to their NYC Schools Account from *any* internet-capable device, such as a computer, cell phone, or tablet. Families can also access information for all of their children through just one account, in up to 10 languages. Also, all student information is encrypted and kept confidential by the NYC Department of Education.

The NYC Schools Account was designed so that new features can be added later on, based on feedback from parents. Before the upcoming 2015-16 school year, students' schedules will be available. Parents can provide feedback and suggest improvements directly through their account.

One parent of a recent high school graduate, Melanie Mendonca, praised the NYC Schools Account look and feel. "This new system is very parent-friendly and easy to use and

navigate. I wish it was in place years ago. It is very convenient that you don't need separate passwords for each child."

Parents can find more information about NYC Schools Account, including frequently asked questions, at schools.nyc.gov/nycschools. This summer, workshops will help parents sign up and learn to use their account. Families can sign up for the tool at any time.

"For the first time, families have the most important academic information about their children in an easy-to-read format on their mobile devices," said Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña. "By launching NYC Schools Account, parents can be more involved and informed than ever before."

NYC Schools to Close on Lunar New Year Beginning Next School Year

The Asian Lunar New Year holiday has been added to the official New York City public schools calendar. Beginning this upcoming school year, all City public schools will be closed on the Lunar New Year. During the 2015-16 school year, schools will close on February 8 for the holiday.

Students will not lose any instructional days as a result of the Lunar New Year school holiday. Families can learn more about the announcement [online](#), and can view the updated school at schools.nyc.gov/calendar/2015-16+calendars.

Dates to Remember

Regents Rating Day: Thursday, June 25

Students who attend high schools that administered Regents exams do not attend school (District 75 schools are still in session)

Last Day of School: Friday, June 26

Early dismissal for all students

Pre-K Families Who Received an Offer

Families who received a pre-K offer must contact the program directly to pre-register. Families must pre-register by Friday, June 26, or they will forfeit their offer. Visit schools.nyc.gov/prek for a list of documents needed to bring for pre-registration.

Families who didn't get an offer to their first choice

**PRE-K
FOR ALL**

program will also be placed on waitlists at other programs they ranked higher on their application.

Round 2 Pre-K Application

Through July 10, all pre-K families can apply to the Round 2 application period, even families who pre-registered and accepted their pre-K offer. Families will also remain eligible for waitlist offers.

Visit schools.nyc.gov/prek for more information.

Message from Carmen

New York City has the most diverse school system in the entire country. Students, families, and staff bring an incredibly wide range of backgrounds and cultures.

When we think of diversity, we often immediately think of religion, ethnicity, or language. But it's important to remember that this diversity includes the way that people—and students in particular—identify and see themselves.

This month is National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) Pride Month. Our schools are important centers for celebrating LGBTQ Pride Month and what it represents— inclusion, diversity, acceptance, understanding, and community. Schools must be places that embrace all students for who they are, and ensure that they feel safe, comfortable, and supported.

However, the reality is that many young people feel afraid to share who they are or what they are feeling. In fact, nationally, over half of LGBTQ students felt unsafe at school because of how they identify. This led to one out of every three of these students

missing a day of school.

Students may be afraid to express themselves because of a personal experience they had, or because of an experience they witnessed. Our program, Respect for All, supports the diversity of students and schools. All members of our school communities need to know what kind of support is available to LGBTQ students at school.

All students should have:

- ▶ A Respect for All staff member who students can talk to. This person should be listed on Respect for All posters throughout the school.
- ▶ Safe spaces for students to find support with LGBTQ issues.
- ▶ Access to the LGBTQ suicide prevention hot line number ([Trevor Project](#), 1-866-488-7386) and gay affirming resources, visible at school so that students do not need to ask a counselor.
- ▶ A school culture that reflects our [transgender student guidelines](#).

Additionally, many schools encourage a [Gay Straight Alliance organization](#). School staff has professional development available to dispel myths and guide ways to support and protect their LGBTQ students. Our PAs and PTAs embrace same-sex families, and messages to students' homes



should not assume “mom and dad” in their greeting.

I encourage you to learn more about our supports for students on our Respect for All web page at schools.nyc.gov/respectforall, or visit schools.nyc.gov/parentsfamilies/lgbtq for a list of resources and books.

We have a great responsibility to nurture the most inclusive and open-minded school culture. It is my hope that all students can be honest with their feelings and identities and can entrust their communities in receiving respect and acceptance.

I encourage you to become an advocate for students at your school. Join your PA or PTA. You can be not only a trusted parent for your child, but for other children. It all just starts with listening.

Best,

Carmen



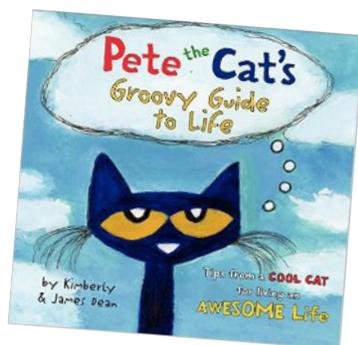
Have a question for the Chancellor? Send it to AskCarmen@schools.nyc.gov

BOOK of the Month

Pete the Cat's Groovy Guide to Life
(Harper Collins Children's Books, 2015)
By Kimberly and James Dean

Dear Readers,

Pete, the cool blue cat, has had many adventures over the years, from rocking out in a pair of red school shoes to transforming a grumpy day into an awesome one through magic sunglasses. In this month's book, **Pete the Cat's Groovy Guide to Life**, he shares his favorite inspirational quotes, interpreting them in his own unique and groovy way. Each quote, paired with charming illustrations, shares an important lesson, while adding a bite of flare that is fun for children and adults alike.



I encourage you to introduce your own personal notes as you read this book aloud to your child. In keeping with this theme, I have tailored a few quotes myself.

Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated. —Confucius

It's extremely important for kids to stay sharp through the summer. To keep learning going, you don't need a day-to-day itinerary. Keep it simple: let your child choose

the books, and encourage him or her to read for just 20 minutes every day. It will make a huge difference when the new school year comes in September.

You miss 100 percent of the shots you don't take.
—Wayne Gretzky

The free time in summer is a great opportunity to try something new. Use the time to dig into a hobby, activity, subject, or craft. Kids can try a new sport; pick out a sketchpad or some watercolors and canvas; take a nature walk or free swimming lessons through [NYC Parks](#); research dinosaurs, planets, or countries; or learn to skateboard. As Pete the Cat says, "Go for it!"

Make each day your masterpiece. —John Wooden

The summer months can fly by. Kids need their down time and relaxation—but at the end of summer, it's important to be able to look back on the last few months and say, "I'm proud of what I did this summer!" Encourage your child to take advantage of all this free time, and approach each day with a purpose. Have fun projects in mind: What will your child build? Create? Imagine? Write? Finish?

There are many more wonderful quotes, from Albert Einstein to William Wordsworth that we can all relate to. Be inspired by these quotes, and inspire your child with these quotes. I know they will give you a boost as you move into summer.

Warmly,

Carmen

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

PUBLIC SCHOOL PRESS

SIGN UP!

PARENT TO PARENT

Dear Parent,

It's hard to believe that there are only two days left until school ends. You have cause to celebrate: your child could not have gotten through the academic year without your support and guidance.

As you prepare to enjoy this time, I would also like to remind you that summer provides a wonderful opportunity for your child to continue learning. In fact, research shows that summers without quality learning opportunities put children at risk of falling behind in core subjects like math and reading.

Friday, June 19 marked National Summer Learning Day, an annual national advocacy day led by the [National Summer Learning Association](#). This day emphasizes high-quality learning opportunities during the summer, which can make a huge difference in avoiding "learning loss."

For ideas and tips, visit [summerlearning.org/keepkidslearning](#).

One of the best ways to stay sharp during the summer is through reading. Kids who read regularly during summer vacation will avoid learning loss, and can even move ahead in school. Children who don't read at all risk sliding backward. As a parent, I understand that work doesn't stop for parents over the summer. But if you can try to read to or with your child 20 minutes each day or more, it will make a huge difference.

You can also join the New York Public Library's Summer Reading Challenge 2015. This year's theme celebrates heroes from popular fantasy and graphic novels and from book series. You can also ask your local librarian about other programs, like writing and photography workshops, held all summer long. Visit [nypl.org/events/](#)

[summerreading](#) to learn more.

Another great place for learning is at NYC parks' 15 Urban Park Ranger Nature Centers. These parks serve as community centers for public education, recreational activities, and environmental studies. The centers are starting points for walking tours and workshop sites for educational programs for the whole family. You can learn more at [nycgovparks.org/facilities/naturecenters](#).

It's not enough for our kids to keep only their minds active over the summer—they have to play and exercise too. There's few places better than the pool. After the school year ends, NYC Parks' free outdoor pools will offer programs like free summer swim classes for all ages and abilities. Visit [nyc.gov/parks](#) for more.

Also, starting June 27, make sure to take advantage of the free, healthy Summer Meals program for all children 18 years old and under. Meals will be available at pools, public schools, NYCHA complexes, libraries, and other locations all across the city. Find a location near you by visiting [nycschoolfood.org](#), calling 311, or texting "NYCMEALS" to 877-877. Using your smartphone, you can also download the new SchoolFood app.

Finally, [nycgo.com](#) offers great information on free activities for kids, as well as NYC museums that are free on certain days of the week.

Whatever you do this summer, I hope you and your family enjoy yourselves. You deserve it.

Best,

Jesse Mojica, Executive Director
Division of Family and Community Engagement

FEED YOUR MIND

WITH

FREE SUMMER MEALS

FOR EVERYONE 18 YEARS OLD AND UNDER!



STARTING JUNE 27TH AT PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS, POOLS, PARKS, LIBRARIES, AND NYCHA LOCATIONS NEAR YOU.

Participation requires no ID, registration, or documentation. Come eat with us!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

-  SchoolFood App
-  www.schoolfoodnyc.org
-  "NYCMEALS" to 877-877
Standard text messaging rates may apply.
-  311