



Joel I. Klein
Chancellor

Laura Rodriguez, Chief Achievement Officer
Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR
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Dear School Community:

In February, Chancellor Klein announced that the Department of Education is taking a bold step in special education, emphasizing student achievement, student success, and personalized support. Over the next two years, all schools will implement changes to support these goals. Your school is one of approximately 250 schools that has agreed to participate in the first phase of these reforms for the 2010-11 school year.

What does this mean for you and your school? Your school, in collaboration with parents and through the IEP process, will soon begin to refine instructional programs by taking a fresh look at the strengths and needs of students with disabilities. The school will also strengthen its systems for analyzing student progress to make necessary adjustments for performance while focusing on three important considerations:

- 1) What is the student's long-term educational goal? Is the student on track to graduate? Is each student with an IEP being prepared for college and/or career opportunities beyond high school? How can the school capitalize on strengths and meet needs so that students meet these goals?
- 2) Does each student with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum and is she/he educated alongside general education peers as much as possible?
- 3) Does each IEP include a focused recommendation for services targeted to student achievement?

For too long, we have been accustomed to thinking of special education services as a "class" or "place" where students spend the school day, like Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT), Self-Contained, or Special Class (SC). Moving forward, these and other services can be used for different parts of the school day and in combination. For example, a student may receive intensive reading instruction in a Self-Contained setting and spend the rest of the day in a general education class with or without support services.

There are a variety of ways that you and your school can develop personalized plans, within the law, to support student achievement and success. As a result, the programs your school develops through the IEP process may be different from the IEP program recommendations we have become accustomed to. And because your school will be utilizing a wider array of special education service options, students will remain in your school until they move on to another school or graduate. Students will not transfer schools because of IEP changes—unless they require highly specialized programs. (Keep in mind, students in 12-month programs may continue to receive summer services at different sites.)

We look forward to your input over the next few months as we promote the achievement and success of every student. We will be working with your principal and your school's network throughout this process. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your principal or network leader.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Laura Rodriguez'.

Laura Rodriguez
Chief Achievement Officer