

PUBLIC SCHOOL PRESS

Latest News for Parents from the NYC Department of Education



Mission Possible: PRE-K

It's a great time to be four years old in New York City: families all across the five boroughs are busy signing up their youngsters for a record-high 53,000 pre-kindergarten seats at public schools and Community-Based Early Childhood Centers (CBECC) for this upcoming September.

Children attending this fall will be the first class of the citywide expanded pre-k initiative, a focal point of Mayor de Blasio's education agenda to create a universal network of free, high-quality pre-k. For these four-year-olds, pre-k

is the first step in a formal education. The skills they will learn—sharing with others, taking turns, working together, and absorbing knowledge—will provide the tools and framework for success in kindergarten and onward.

While efforts for building a citywide pre-k framework have been ongoing since January, June will be the busiest month for parents. Families who met the April 23 public school application deadline just received their school placement offers, and families applying to CBECC programs have less

than two weeks remaining until the priority application deadline. Families who missed the April deadline can also now start contacting schools directly about

seat availability. There will be crossover, as families are urged to apply to both public school and CBECC programs—the City will

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26%
increase in
available
pre-k seats





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weigh families' priorities and make appropriate matches.

To increase capacity and meet parents' demand, this winter and spring, City officials carried on an unrelenting campaign locating space and resources. Principals, community leaders, and organization heads were all involved in the effort to add new pre-k seats to existing public schools as well as CBECC programs, or pre-k programs at daycares, libraries, and other organizations that have been screened and approved by the Department of Education. These efforts resulted in a 26 percent increase in available pre-k seats in comparison to the current year.

While nearly 73 percent of all eligible four year olds will have access to free, high-quality pre-k this fall, the number of seats will grow to 73,000 by fall of 2015: enough to serve every four year old in New York City.

CLOUDETTE

(Henry Holt and Co., 2011)

Written and illustrated by Tom Lichtenheld

Dear Readers,
I am thrilled to share the June Book of the Month, *Cloulette*, written and illustrated by Tom Lichtenheld. Our heroine Cloulette is a petite puff of a cloud who wishes she was powerful enough to water crops or do other important jobs like the big clouds. Then, one day, a ferocious storm blows her far from home and she discovers her purpose: she musters the strength to create enough rain to fill a dried-up pond, giving the frogs a place to play. The experience teaches her that even the tiniest

among us can make a big difference.

While this book can be read on many levels and interpreted in many ways, ultimately it is about being needed, and making a difference through determination, diligence, and dedication. Your drive to move your schools toward excellence will make a significant difference in the lives of the students, teachers, and other families in your communities.

THE CHANCELLOR'S

BOOK of the Month

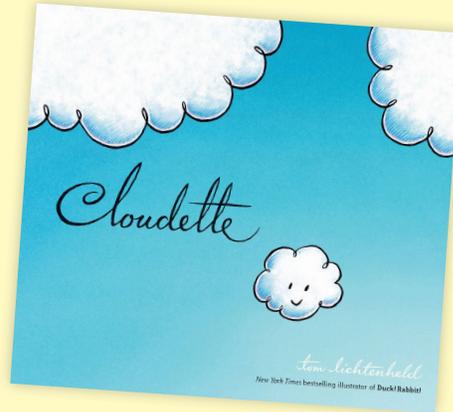
As the school year comes to a close, I urge you to take the time to reflect on your child's journey and pause to recognize and celebrate all that he or she has accomplished. Looking back and collecting evidence

of success sets the foundation for our kids to accomplish big and important things.

I want to thank three principals—Sandra Soto, Curtis Palmore, and Carlen Padmore-Gateau—for presenting me with this inspirational

book and for understanding that its message mirrors my can-do approach to education. As a parent, never doubt that your efforts are critical to our school system's success. Let us end this school year like *Cloulette*: exhausted, but happy in our determination to continue to do the important work that matters most.

Best,
Carmen



FROM OUR READERS:



As a parent of a third grade student in Queens, I am excited and thankful for the news about incorporating additional metrics for promotional policies. My daughter experienced anxiety with the recent exams since she understood the results determined her promotion. With this new policy being implemented, students will feel secure that their hard work throughout the year will be considered and increase the likelihood of advancement. Again thank you for bringing this news to our attention!



Yours truly,
Dianna-Kaye Nain
Kew Gardens, Queens

Opportunity Starts Now™

To apply for free, high-quality

PRE-K:

Visit nyc.gov/prek

Q&A WITH CARMEN

Middle schools have been a topic of discussion recently. What does the DOE have planned to strengthen their programs?

Learning does not begin or end at the classroom door. With the world's greatest cultural institutions at our fingertips, we have an exciting way to inspire students and cultivate high-level learning. Last month we celebrated the launch of Teen Thursdays, a new afterschool initiative to enable students at middle schools across the City to take advantage of the rich learning opportunities available through local cultural institutions.

This pilot partnership offers unique approaches to academic topics, such as American history, through afterschool visits to cultural institutions. These hands-on experiences mix academic and cultural activities, and involve trained museum educators. Principals in the pilot program have identified up to 25 students from their 7th or 8th grade classes to participate. Selected students participate in six weekly afterschool sessions every Thursday.

All afterschool programs for middle school students are important to keep our teens engaged. Our City offers some of the best cultural outlets in the world. Teen Thursdays turns these institutions into classrooms outside of the schools.



You have been quoted as saying that the de Blasio administration's "respect" for educators should also apply to kids. What would that look like?

I am committed to ensuring our schools are safe and orderly environments in which teaching and learning take place each day. A safe and supportive school depends upon the efforts of all members of the school community to treat one another with mutual respect. In order to create a respectful school community, students, staff, and parents must know and understand the standards of behavior that all students are expected to live up to and the consequences if these standards are not met. That is why taking the time to read and discuss our discipline code with students, parents, and one another is so important.

Even more important, if we can adjust our perspective so that behavioral incidents become an opportunity for student growth and understand that problematic behavior can be used as a "teachable moment," we will be supporting our students with a positive approach to discipline that fosters social and emotional growth.

Our teachers and other school staff must be trained to intervene quickly with

misbehaving students and to try counseling, restorative approaches and/or other interventions before moving to suspensions. This kind of progressive discipline uses incremental interventions, whenever possible, to address inappropriate behavior with the ultimate goal of teaching pro-social behavior.

Now that summer is here, how can we keep our kids on track for learning?

NYC Summer Quest is a free, five-week, full-day summer learning program that provides elementary and middle school students with fun, hands-on enrichment experiences while strengthening their academic skills. DOE teachers collaborate with educators from community-based organizations to offer students Common Core-aligned instruction, enrichment activities, sports and recreation, and field trips. Last summer, 96 percent of parents felt their child was better prepared for school in the fall because of Summer Quest.

This summer, the program will be offered in 26 schools in Community School Districts 7, 8, 9 and 12 in the South Bronx and Districts 19 and 23 in Brooklyn from Monday, July 7 through Friday, August 8. For more information, check out: <http://schools.nyc.gov/ParentsFamilies/NYCSummerQuest>



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

PARENT COORDINATOR PROFILE

CONSTANDINA PILIOS is a Parent Coordinator for PS 17Q, a community school located in one of the most culturally diverse neighborhoods in Queens.

What makes PS 17Q a community school?

We call PS 17Q a community school because of the shared effort between our school and the community to ensure all our children reach their fullest potential. We have received support from multiple stakeholders to pursue the building of bridges within the community. In the long-term we envision a community hub where families feel safe, secure and involved in the decision making process.

How did this community model come about?

Our principal opened the doors of our school to various community-based organizations in an effort to offer programs all families can benefit from. Some of our partnerships include Zone 126, New York Cares, City Year, Asphalt Green, Office of Adult Education (OACE), Child Center of New York (CCNY), Community Word, and ParentCorps. Having these partnerships within our school allows families to take advantage of an array of services. In addition, we invite our partnerships to our school-wide



events so that parents are exposed to them as often as possible.

What are some of the programs that PS 17Q offers that another school might not?

Our Spanish Dual Language program enables students to become proficient in multiple languages, and develop an appreciation for bilingualism. Through our collaboration with Zone 126, we welcomed the opportunity to work with the NYU Parent-Corps, a family-focused, school-based program that engages families and promotes high-quality learning environments for young children. Zone 126 provided us the opportunity to provide ESL and Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) programs through the Office of Adult and Continuing Education for our parents/families so they are able to further their education.

What is your approach to family outreach?

My approach to outreach

is constant communication. I begin in September with a welcome letter/parent survey. The results are used to plan workshops based on the needs of our families. Communication with families occurs in many different ways from placing letters in back packs, mailing letters home, emailing parents, sending out automated phone call reminders, displaying poster size reminders of events in and around the building and main entrance, and personal one-on-one conversations.

I have found Translation and Interpretation Services to be a key component in conducting meaningful outreach. In such a highly diverse school as PS 17Q, I try my hardest to make sure our monthly calendars, automated phone messages and reminders are translated. We also provide interpreters during Parents Association meetings, parent workshops, and one-on-one meetings, allowing parents to understand the important information being provided to them. I know that if I want to have

effective outreach, I have to make every effort possible to communicate with all my families, no matter the language barrier or other obstacles.

How do you think your role as a Parent Coordinator influences families?

Parents and guardians truly care about their children and want nothing more than to help their children succeed. Our goal is to create a bridge between the school and the community, so that we are all connected and all contributing to the success of not only our students, but their families, as well.

I am a mother of three children, one who is an exceptional twenty-year-old young lady with Cerebral Palsy. As a parent, I encourage my own children to be life-long learners, and I place a great emphasis on education. I value education, and have always encouraged my children to express themselves freely. I credit my work as a Parent Coordinator to my personal life experiences that have given me the tools needed to relate on a much deeper level with families from diverse backgrounds.

I have grown and gained so much from the families at PS 17Q. I love my job and I approach it with the same effort I do with my own family. I love the cultural diversity, the neighborhood and our entire school community. The people are what make PS 17Q the special place it is.

PARENT ACADEMY CORNER

PA/PTA ELECTIONS LAST CALL & TRANSITION TIME

June is the month for school-level parent leaders across the City to focus on important Parent Association (PA) and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) housekeeping matters. If your school has not held its election, this serves as a final reminder that the deadline for elections is June 26, the last day of school. A notice of your school's election must be posted at least 10 calendar days prior to the election. Once the election is complete, here

are key tasks to consider: **Transition** – Schedule a meeting with the school principal, the outgoing board and the newly elected board to officially transfer records. Please refer to Chancellor's Regulation A-660, Article I (G) 6 – Maintaining and Transferring PA/PTA Records.

Best Practices – Share your knowledge and experience. Consider sharing tips on budget approval and expense requirements, as well as how to navigate

bylaws and other resources. In addition, records maintenance and organization is important. If you don't already have one, create a binder of the year's meeting notices, agendas and minutes categorized by month.

Support – Access resources and professional development designed to support you, including your Presidents' Council and your District Family Advocate (DFA)—many who hold trainings specifically for

PA/PTAs, review online resources or reach out to the Division of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) for trainings on financial matters and additional support.

Strong PA and PTAs are the foundation for parent leadership at all levels of our school system, so the best way to close a great year of service to your school is to ensure that the next body of parent leaders is organized and prepared to build on your success!

PARENT TO PARENT

with Jesse Mojica



The parent leadership structure within the DOE is a powerful voice that works hard to serve the best interest of all of the public school parents in the City. A well organized, well-run PA/PTA gives parents a place to go when they need help or when they want to help. The PA/PTA meeting is the place to hear what's going on at the school, exchange ideas, solve problems and help direct the school into the future. The PA/PTA president serves on the school's School Leadership Team (SLT) along with other elected parents and members of the school's staff and faculty.

Beyond the school level, PA/PTA presidents serve parents as members of District and Borough Presidents' Councils. These councils help get PA/PTAs get off the ground, restore non-functioning ones, and provide assistance with interpretation of bylaws and

regulations. They also help disseminate information, promote district-wide interests and identify district needs. PA/PTA core officers cast votes as selectors for District Community Education Councils (CECs), responsible for district-wide parent involvement regarding school zoning, among other duties. PA/PTA officers also select members for four important citywide councils: Citywide Council on Special Education, Citywide Council on High Schools, District 75 Council, and Citywide Council on English Languages Learners.

Another level of parent leadership is the Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council (CPAC). CPAC members advise the Chancellor on DOE policy and relay important information back to their constituencies. Members of CPAC are presidents of their respective district or borough President's Council, but most

importantly, they are all still presidents of their school's PA or PTA.

As you can see, the parent leadership structure is a resource for the entire school community. Yet none of this would be possible without the support of the parents—at the school level. In the end, every council, every team, every panel is only as strong, only as diligent, and only as effective as the school-based PAs and PTAs that form the foundation of parent leadership. With your participation, we can maximize this tool for the benefit of all our public school children.

Best,

Jesse Mojica,
Executive Director
Division of Family and
Community Engagement (FACE)

ATTEND A WEBINAR!

Chancellor Fariña is leading an effort to think through ways to strengthen the NYCDOE's structures that provide support to schools. The Strategic Planning Team would like to invite you to attend a webinar about this strategic planning work to learn more and discuss your feedback. Your input and insight are critical in helping the Chancellor's leadership team understand the needs of your school community: lessons learned from past reform efforts and factors critical for success. Please share the information below with members of your school community:

Families may register here for a strategic planning conversation on June 19 from 12:30–1:30 p.m., hosted by Chief Strategy Officer Josh Wallack and Chancellor's Parent Advisory Committee Co-Chairs Martha Kessler and Alim Gafar.

For questions, email StratgyIdeas@schools.nyc.gov.

Mark Your Calendar

JUNE 19 – District 29 Town Hall with Chancellor Fariña

JUNE 26 – Last Day of School

JULY 1 – First day of Summer School

Summer Family Day Activities:

JUNE 21 AND JUNE 22, Brooklyn Family Day: Barolosolo Cirkus Company in Brooklyn Bridge Park features the show *ile O*, a mash-up of slapstick

and acrobatics presented in a shallow pool of water.

JULY 6, Global Family Day in Central Park features performances by the Okee Dokee Brothers, the Hybrid Movement Company, the Acrobuffos and National Dance Institute.

JULY 13, Bronx Family Day in St. Mary's Park features performances by David Gonzalez's Aesop Bops! Funky Fables, the Kids Junk Orchestra and Secret Agent 23 Skidoo

JULY 20, Queens Family Day in Queensbridge Park features performances by the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, Rashida Bumbray, and Michael Mossman & Copland Jazz

AUGUST 17, Harlem Family Day in Marcus Garvey Park features performances by Shine and the Moonbeams, Moona Luna, Kojo Odu Roney & Friends, B-Love's Hip Hop Jazzy Groove and DJ KS 360

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July 15 -24

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