



June 2013

Dear Parents,

I have asked your Principal to share this letter so you can hear directly from me about why your child is being recommended for summer school.

Your child is being recommended for summer school because your child's English and math scores indicate that he or she needs more time to master the content and skills in this year's curriculum. This summer, your child will have additional opportunities to work closely with teachers in the areas where he or she needs extra support.

Because some parents have expressed concern about the changes in this year's State tests, I also want to explain how these changes relate to your child. Throughout the school year, students have been challenged by the new Common Core standards, which describe what all of our students need to know and be able to do to graduate from high school ready for college and careers. These standards require students to read more difficult books and spend more time writing. When students share their opinions, teachers are asking them to use evidence to back up their points. In math class, students are developing relevant skills they will be able to apply in future courses and jobs.

This year, for the first time, the third- to eighth-grade State exams began to assess these skills. Because the tests are new, we cannot predict how the State will determine performance levels. Instead, we looked at students' overall scores—how many questions each student got right. Students with the lowest 10 percent of scores are being recommended for summer school. Some students with disabilities and English language learners have different promotion standards, given their unique needs. Overall, the number of students attending summer school is similar to last year.

Please reassure your child that attending summer school does not mean that he or she isn't learning or working hard enough. Summer school is an opportunity for your child to engage in additional learning opportunities and to receive additional support from teachers. Resources to help you learn more about what your child is learning in school are available online. Visit nyc.gov and search for "Common Core Parent Resources." You can also find a family-friendly timeline on summer school and the promotion process at <http://schools.nyc.gov/ParentsFamilies/PromotionSummerSchool>.

Thank you for your commitment to your child's education.

Sincerely,

Dennis M. Walcott