

PUBLIC SCHOOL PRESS

Latest News for Parents from the NYC Department of Education



The Four Pillars:

Building Blocks for the Future

In the seven busy months since Carmen Fariña was appointed Chancellor, the Department of Education has advanced several initiatives, and the vision behind this new infusion of energy has now been unveiled.

Earlier this summer, the Chancellor presented the guidelines she believes should be at the heart of the Department's goals: the Four Pillars. These pillars outline strategies for improving student achievement and engaging

entire communities, from students, parents, and educators to community members and business partners. They are:



1 Improve student achievement by aligning all instruction to the Common Core standards.

In order for children to meet the challenges of the Common Core, the Chancellor has stated that it is important that the education process begins at the earliest stage possible. Providing resources for second, seventh, and tenth grades is a top priority, since they are critical to a student's success in later grades. Implementing Pre-K for All and supplementing the middle school curriculum with technology and art classes



2 Restore dignity and respect to the craft of teaching and school leadership.

The establishment of the Learning Partners program, which allows principals and schools to share best practices, is a first step in creating a community among the City's educators. The Chancellor recently said, "We've already seen the positive impact that results when the knowledge and talents of teachers and principals are recognized

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3 Engage parents and families in every aspect of school life. If parents are given frequent updates concerning their child’s progress and encouraged to participate in school meetings, they will be able to guide their children to success. The Chancellor has organized

parent surveys and when workshops were offered on parent-selected topics, attendance was high. In addition, the new teacher contract affords 40 minutes each week for teachers to build strong home-school connections.

4 Create new collaborative and innovative models. Mayor de Blasio’s recent announcement of a \$52 million investment to launch Community Schools will lead the way in innovation. Fariña said to “partner

schools with community-based organizations will bring a wealth of services to lift up students and parents and create a foundation for academic success.”

The Four Pillars represent the DOE’s holistic approach to education and this year’s achievements clearly reflect the values embedded within these guidelines. Come this September, the Chancellor and her team are clearly ready to hit the ground running.



TO DARE MIGHTY THINGS

(Hyperion Books, 2013)
Written by Doreen Rappaport and illustrated by C.F. Payne

Dear Parents,

I have chosen a non-fiction Book of the Month for July that aligns with my commitment to strengthening social studies instruction in our schools. *To Dare Mighty*

Things (Hyperion Books, 2013), written by Doreen Rappaport and illustrated by C.F. Payne, is a biography of President Theodore Roosevelt.

This book is not only a great read; it reminds us that social studies is integral to a well-rounded education, teaching us our places in history and the importance of thinking globally.

Roosevelt struggled with sickness as a child, and ultimately overcame many challenges—and changed the world. Talk about realizing possibilities! Enjoy helping your child realize his or her own possibilities!

Warmly,

Carmen



PARENT ACADEMY CORNER

Chancellor Fariña has committed to elevating the role of the Parent Coordinator (PC), by providing increased professional development training. In this way, they receive uniform guidance on how to best serve families and share best practices with each other. PCs are also organizing more and more workshops in response to the needs that parents have expressed, including a “Homework HELP” workshop and “English Language Learners (ELL) Parent Orientation.”

Your PC serves as a bridge between you and your child’s school. They work all year round to help you sort out your family’s particular needs. While your child is not in school full-time over the summer, you still have an opportunity to collaborate with your PC on a strategy for greater success in the upcoming year. If English is not your first language, your PC can provide you with translation services to help you to become involved.

If you are traveling or working a lot this summer and meeting in person is too challenging, make sure you are on your PC’s e-mail distribution list, so that you can receive monthly calendars and information about upcoming events, and learn about community resources you may not have been aware of. To connect with your Parent Coordinator, call the school office or search your school’s contact information at <http://schools.nyc.gov/default.htm>.

No child benefits from a one-size-fits-all approach to education. That’s why the role of the PC exists – to help tailor a game plan that will help your child excel at school and beyond. Educating your child is a team effort, and we can all pitch in and help!

PARENT TO PARENT

Dear Parents,

I hope you and your family are enjoying a relaxing summer! Last month I wrote about the parent leadership structure within the DOE, sharing the important duties of the Parent Association (PA)/ Parent Teacher Association (PTA). This month I want to continue our conversation by focusing on another key element of the parent leadership structure.

Presidents' Councils operate on the district level (or borough level for high schools). These councils are made up of presidents from local PAs/PTAs in elementary and middle schools, and work closely with the District Family Advocate and the Community Superintendent. High schools work with the Borough Family Advocate and the High School Superintendent.

One example illustrates the role of a Presidents' Council: one school had its end-of-year activities (carnival, prom) threatened by dissension on the PTA Executive Board and resignation of the president. The Presidents' Council president stepped in to advise on succession and new elections and conducted an audit of the PTA books. This

enabled the PTA to keep operating and sign contracts with vendors. In other words, the show still went on! When you participate on your Presidents' Council you can provide techni-

cal assistance to your PA/PTA, and meet with your superintendent and other PA/PTA presidents regularly to share information and best practices. Getting involved in this way allows you to become more of an advisor within the parent leadership structure.

On the citywide level, the presidents of all the Presidents' Councils constitute the voting membership of the Chancellor's Parent Advisory Committee (CPAC). CPAC provides representation for all parents and serves in an advisory capacity to the Chancellor. CPAC receives monthly updates from the Chancellor and members of her team regarding Department initiatives and policies that impact the public school system. CPAC also supports local parent leadership by sharing this information through district and borough Presidents' Councils. By serving on the CPAC, you have the power to provide direct input to the Chancellor—on the issues that matter most to parents. CPAC members have the ability to be game-changers, and truly affect policy.

Think about what your goals are as an involved parent, and consider how you would like to share your time and talents. Together we can elevate our school system to a higher level.

Sincerely,



Jesse Mojica

Executive Director

Division of Family and Community Engagement (FACE)



PRE-K FOR ALL

#OpportunityStartsNow

Children born in 2010 are still eligible to apply for free, full-day, high-quality pre-K.

- ▶ Call 311
- ▶ Text "pre-k" to 877-877
- ▶   /nycschools

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

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

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SIGN UP!



Summer Quest

July 7 kicked off NYC Summer Quest—a free, five-week, full day summer learning program providing elementary and middle school students with a range of fun, hands-on experiences including art, music, and dance, while strengthening their academic skills.

The Urban Assembly School for Applied Math and Science is one of the sites offering the pilot program. Principal David Krulwich says it is one of the most valuable programs he has witnessed in his 15 years working with middle school students. “Historically, summer school has been perceived as a punitive measure. But Summer Quest is designed to create a learning environment where kids want to participate.”

Extensive research documents the phenomenon known as “summer learning loss,” indicating that as much as two-thirds of the 9th grade achievement gap in reading

can be attributed to the cumulative effects of summer learning loss. To actively combat this phenomenon, DOE teachers and educators from community-based organizations (CBO) collaborate to offer Common Core-aligned instruction, sports and recreation, and field trips. At Principal David Krulwich’s Summer Quest site, kids can choose activities from blogging to map-making—and all students participate in an overnight camping trip outside the City.

For the third year in a row, the Department of Education has partnered with the Department of Youth and Community Development as well as the Fund for Public Schools to provide NYC Summer Quest. After just two years, NYC Summer Quest has improved literacy skills among students entering 1st and 2nd grade and garnered incredibly high rates of parent satisfaction.

Public and private funding supports the original 11 school/

Designed to be engaging and fun, creating a learning environment where kids want to participate.



CBO partnerships for up to 1,810 elementary and middle school students in the South Bronx. For Summer 2014, there are 11 new publicly funded sites, expanding Summer Quest to Brooklyn, keeping more children learning and engaged over their summer break.

Summer Learning Events Around the City

It's no secret that New York City is a great place for fun. But all that exploring can cost you a pretty penny—unless you know where to look. Forget staying at home to save money. Here, we've rounded up the best ways for young New Yorkers (and young visitors) to get out on the town without paying a dime.

NYC PARKS FREE OUTDOOR POOLS

Welcome summer by visiting one of New York City's free outdoor pools! NYC Parks' outdoor pools offer many amenities including free summer swim programs for all ages and free, healthy summer meals through the DOE's office of SchoolFood for all children 18 years old and under. Find a local pool near you: www.nycgov-parks.org/facilities/outdoor-pools.

For more information, visit nyc.gov/parks. To find a summer meals location, visit www.schoolfoodnyc.org.



SUMMER PLAY STREET ACTIVITIES: THROUGH AUGUST 23

Free, adult-supervised summer games and activities for all youths will be held at designated streets, schools, and playgrounds on summer weekdays. Older kids play stickball, volleyball, basketball, skully, and double Dutch, among others, while younger kids have jump rope, hopscotch and relay races. Also chess, checkers, mancala (a board strategy game) for some mental exercise.

To find a Play Street near you, visit www.palnyc.org or call the Police Athletic League at 212-477-9450, ext. 389.

MUSIC OFFERED BY NYC PARKS DEPARTMENT

Take in some tunes in New York City's great outdoors. Musicians from around the world perform everything from opera to hip hop to world music, all in a park near you. We're particularly excited about a free concert in Brooklyn Bridge Park on Sunday, August 3rd at Pier 6. Shine & The Moonbeams will play from 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. Their soulful R&B children's music will have kids singing and grooving in the sun.

For more listings, visit: www.nycgovparks.org/events/free_summer_concerts.

DIRECTORIES NOTICE

Students applying to a NYC public high school for the 2015-2016 school year can now access the 2014-2015 High School Directory online in nine languages: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu. All non-native English speakers who will par-



ticipate in the admissions process are encouraged to review the directories by visiting nyc.gov/schools/ChoicesEnrollment/High/Resources.

For more information on the 2014-2015 High School Directory, please contact the High School Admissions Team at:

HS_Enrollment@schools.nyc.gov or schools.nyc.gov/highschool.