

MAY 2015

PUBLIC SCHOOL PRESS

Latest News for Parents from the NYC Department of Education



**Teen
Thursdays
Program to
Expand**

Museums as Classrooms

A dozen or so middle schoolers stood huddled together, listening intently with sketch pads in hand. They were taking notes on famed artist Chuck Close's 1986 painting, *Lucas*.

But these students from P.S. 7 in Manhattan weren't just looking at a photograph or copy of the art: the Metropolitan Museum of Art

was the classroom, and an expert on American art was leading the instruction.

Through the NYC Department of Education's Teen Thursdays program, 7th and 8th grade students from 55 middle schools across the City have been able to visit museums like the Met, Brooklyn Children's Museum, Bronx Museum of the Arts, and

others to explore learning outside the traditional school day. This month, Chancellor Carmen Fariña announced that Teen

Thursdays will expand to include 60 schools for the upcoming school year.

"This program is a great reminder for our middle-schoolers, no matter their zip code or family

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background, that our City’s amazing museums, galleries, concert halls, and theatres are spaces for them to take advantage of and benefit from,” said the Chancellor.

Through an application process, middle schools partner with a specific cultural organization to give 7th and 8th grade students hands-on learning experiences. The cultural organization works directly with the school to develop a theme for each visit that supports what students are learning in school. Students who

are selected by their principal to participate attend seven after-school sessions at their partner institution every Thursday.

“This is a real opportunity for our kids to see beyond just classroom academics and escape into art,” said Principal Sameer Talati of P.S. 7. “These young teens are studying major works of art—at one of the world’s greatest art museums—in their original form, in person. Not in a textbook.”

Staff from the Met worked with P.S.7 to develop an American art and history curriculum and

weekly sessions that support what they are studying in school. Students have been encouraged to think critically about the art they see and interpret its meaning, including asking ‘in what way is American art propaganda?’

The expansion of Teen Thursdays means that more schools and students will have these types of hands-on experiences to explore art, history, and culture at a much deeper level.

Learn more here.[here](#).



Dates to Remember

June 4

Chancellor’s Conference Day

All schools closed for students

June 9

Clerical Day

Early dismissal for elementary school, middle school, and District 75 students

June 15

Clerical Day

Early dismissal for elementary school, middle school, and District 75 students

June 25

Regents Rating Day

No school for high school students (except District 75 students)

June 26

Last Day of School

Early dismissal

Staten Island Students Give the Gift of Shelter



Three South Carolina families are homeowners for the very first time, thanks to New York City students.

Last month, students from the Michael J. Petrides School and Tottenville High School on Staten Island spent their time off during spring break working for a good cause. For five days, students volunteered for Habitat for Humanity to build wooden frames and walls for what would eventually become completed, livable homes for families.

Twenty-seven students and eight

teachers ventured on the nine-day trip, stopping along the way to learn about local history and culture, before arriving at their destination: the barrier islands of South Carolina. With guidance and direction, the young builders worked on roofs and mounted frames, lifted two-by-four lumber perfectly into place to set up a corner—and another corner—and another—until the outlines of individual rooms were clearly marked, only in a matter of hours. Other students built out a front porch, while others worked to organize and sort donated

furniture, appliances, building materials, and other home goods to be resold as part of the non-profit's ReStore program. While the students spent most of their time in construction, volunteers also took turns cleaning the houses they stayed at and preparing three meals a days for the group.

The trip to construct homes marked the largest yet for the Staten Island schools. And while the trip only lasted a matter of days, the work of these students will continue to affect families for decades to come.

PRE-K FOR ALL

Do You Have a Child Who Turns 4 this Year?

Then your child is eligible to attend free, high-quality pre-K this September. The DOE offers both district school and NYC Early Education Center pre-K programs. New this year, families can apply to all programs using a single application.

Find out more about Pre-K for All at nyc.gov/prek.

Children born in 2011 are eligible to apply for free, full-day, high-quality pre-K.

▶ Call 311 ▶ Text "prek" to 877-877 ▶ [f](https://www.facebook.com/nycschools) [t](https://twitter.com/nycschools) /nycschools



I Wish You More

(Chronicle Books, 2015)

By Amy Krouse Rosenthal,

illustrated by Tom Lichtenheld

[Excerpts used with permission from Chronicle Books, San Francisco. Visit chroniclebooks.com.]

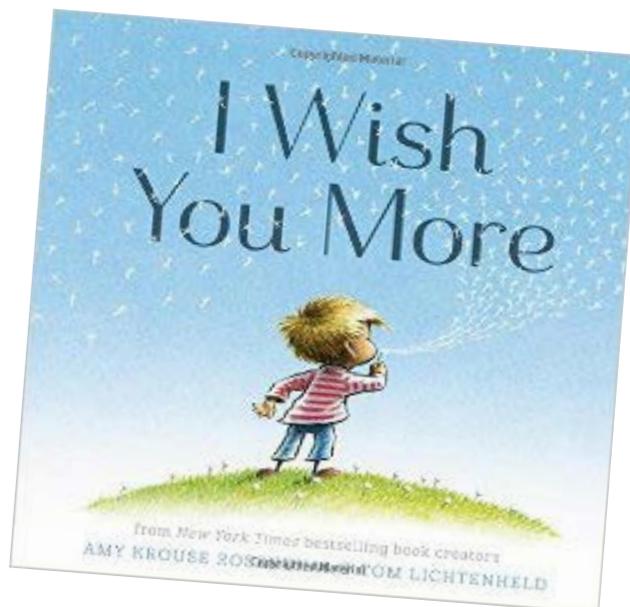
This month's book, *I Wish You More*, is full of good wishes for a child's future—for curiosity and discovery, friendship and connection, strength and support, and quiet moments in which to reflect—qualities that enable all of us to live rich, rewarding lives.

In this uplifting book, the author and illustrator wisely forgo the clichéd wishes for fame and fortune and instead celebrate the many small wishes every parent has for his or her child. The adorable illustrations are sure to delight children, while the sparse, crisp text speaks volumes to families of our schools. As you read the book aloud to your child, personalize these messages as well.

I wish you more ups than downs.

I wish you more we than me.

I wish you more hugs than ughs.



I wish you more WOO-HOO! Than WHOA!

I wish you more time for thoughtful conversations.

I wish you more treasures than pockets.

I wish you a perfect end to this school year; I know how hard you work to support your child's learning and growth.

Share your wishes with your child's teachers, and what you hope for as the school year comes to a close. Ask your child to add his or her own thoughts and wishes and share them with you.

Finally, share your wishes with me. Email them to AskCarmen@schools.nyc.gov

Warmly,

Carmen

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PUBLIC SCHOOL PRESS

SIGN UP!

PARENT TO PARENT

Dear Parents,

Since the Citywide and Community Education Council election season began early this year, you have heard me emphasize the importance of getting involved in your child's school. These elections have been the source of much excitement and momentum.

I am thrilled to announce that hundreds of parents have been selected to serve on the 36 Citywide and Community Education Councils, where 325 seats were up for election. This year's "Raise Your Hand" campaign was met with an outpouring of enthusiasm from parents across each borough who applied to play an active role in public education and represent their school communities.

Most exciting of all, the English Language Learners (ELL) Council will be fully seated for the first time in history. The significance of this cannot be overstated. It is deeply moving to me to see barriers being lifted.

With this election, the Councils are now much more evenly represented by parents who bring all sorts of special knowledge and experience to the table. Chancellor Fariña has made parent engagement a key component of her administration, and now parents like you are in place to take our schools to the next level.

We are very encouraged by the increase in parent participation in this year's

selection process. Participation increased across the board, as more parents ran for the Councils and more parent leaders voted to elect them than in past elections. In fact, 75% more parents applied to run for Citywide and Community Education Councils compared to the most recent elections in 2013. The results are posted at NYCParentLeaders.org.

As a fellow parent, I want to personally thank you for your patience, passion, and commitment to helping us elevate New York City's public schools to the highest level. This is a team effort, and your involvement makes a huge difference.

Let's keep moving forward.

Jesse Mojica
Executive Director
Division of Family and Community Engagement



Dining on a Work of Art

Sit down at one of these tables, and there's sure to be no shortage of conversation.

New York City students have converted 10 ordinary lunchroom tables into colorful works of art that represent their views and positions on social issues. But the topics go far beyond what's normally expected of young teens. Instead, these students are addressing issues like gun violence, racism, and child neglect.

"We chose gun violence," says Mouhamed, a 6th grader at I.S. 219 New Venture School in the Bronx. "We feel strongly about gun violence because it's a serious issue

that affects [people] globally."

The public art project titled "A View From the Lunchroom: Students Bringing Issues to the Table," is part of an annual event made possible by LeAP, Learning Through Expanded Arts Program. The artwork is placed in parks across the five boroughs for public display, and each piece is meant to initiate conversations from park visitors — or from anyone looking to take a break and sit down.

Two schools from each borough are participating in the project. Students at each school worked closely together to choose an issue and create a unique design.

The tables were presented at an exhibition in Union Square on May 19, but the tables have since been moved to their temporary displays around the City. The tables will remain on display through August.

Watch a video to learn more about the program [here](#).



ELL Borough Parent Conferences

These events will offer the parents and guardians of ELLs and former ELLs valuable information and practical insights about the exciting learning opportunities available to their children in New York City during the summer.

- ▶ **DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS** ▶ **ELL PROGRAM OPTIONS** ▶ **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELL FAMILIES**
- ▶ **SUMMER PROGRAMS OPPORTUNITIES** ▶ **COLLEGE PLANNING**

Bronx/ Manhattan

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10

8:30 am - 1:00 pm
Fordham University
McGinley Center 204
441 East Fordham Road
Bronx, NY 10458

Brooklyn/ Staten Island

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3

8:30 am - 1:00 pm
Brooklyn UFT Office
335 Adams Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Queens

TUESDAY, JUNE 9

8:30 am - 1:00 pm
LaGuardia
Community College
31-10 Thomson Avenue
Queens, NY 11101

TO REGISTER:

Online at schools.nyc.gov/academics/ell or by phone (212) 374-6072.
For more information about this event, email dellss@schools.nyc.gov
On-site interpretation services are available upon request.