

July 8, 2021

Dear Families,

We made it! I hope you are all having a restful start to the summer. As you relax and reflect on the past year, we have been hard at work planning the year to come. The past year has presented us with unimaginable challenges, but also incredible opportunities for big change.

I've been a DOE educator for more than 20 years, and I know that turning these opportunities into real change is the work of a whole community! So we talked to principals, teachers, central office staff, families, and students who shared their experiences over the last year—and their hopes for how we move forward.

Your voices were clear: We have a chance to make key changes to some very important parts of teaching and learning, in every grade. Right now, we can break down stubborn inequities and make sure that no matter what school your child enters, they are warmly welcomed, and met with the highest academic expectations—and that we are ready to help them achieve.

This year, healing will happen alongside rigorous academics. I want to share just a little bit about what will change this coming year, thanks to a \$635 million investment in our academic comeback for our one million students.

Before I do, I want to acknowledge that not every family feels the same way about returning to school in person. Many families are excited and ready for full-time reconnection for their children. Others feel anxious, or unsure about potential risks. I can promise you that your child's health is our number one priority, now and always. We are opening full time for every student because we know we can protect their health and safety—and yours. And we know that being in school is critically important for your child's growth and success.

Our Academic Recovery Plan below explains some of how we are seizing this moment so your child can learn, heal, and thrive. More information will be posted on [schools.nyc.gov](https://schools.nyc.gov) this summer.

I am so excited for our homecoming on September 13 for every student—more excited than I've ever been in my two decades at the DOE. I am honored to share this journey with you and your child, and look forward to reconnecting as we approach the beginning of the school year.

In partnership,



Meisha Porter  
New York City Schools Chancellor

## **NYC PUBLIC SCHOOLS: WHAT YOU WILL SEE IN SEPTEMBER**

### **Your Child Will Feel Welcomed, and Helped to Heal from the Past Year**

Children in every community are carrying trauma caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. A successful academic recovery can only happen when the emotional and mental health needs of students are also addressed.

- We will hire over 500 new social workers and other mental health support staff so that your child's school has at least one social worker or school-based mental health clinic.
- We will begin adding over 130 new community schools to provide expanded social, emotional, academic, and extracurricular services in communities where they're most needed.

### **Your Child's Literacy Skills Will Be a Priority**

Literacy and reading are absolutely fundamental to children's ability to reach important milestones all along the educational journey. Our goal is to have every student reading on grade level by the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.

- If you have a child in kindergarten through grade 2, their teachers will use a tool to identify strengths and challenges at the beginning of the year, and develop support plans tailored to their specific needs.
- Thousands of teachers in these grades will receive extra training to support literacy.
- 140 more teachers will be hired to reduce class sizes at 72 elementary schools with the specific goal of improving reading proficiency.
- We will bring the number of reading coaches in our successful Universal Literacy coaching program to 500 so every early childhood and K-2 classroom has one.
- In addition, we will give schools funding for targeted supports for students, such as , extended day and enrichment activities.

### **Your Child Will Grow Their Technological Skills**

This September, we will build on what we have learned about the benefits of technology. Students will develop digital skills to prepare them for the new economy.

- We will distribute an additional 175,000 devices so every K-12 student who needs one has access to one.
- We will launch an eighth-grade technology project for students to demonstrate their digital literacy skills.
- We will train 5,000 K-12 teachers to teach computer science coursework.
- We will expand Computer Science for All, to support computational thinking, problem-solving, and digital skills for 400,000 students by 2024.

### **More Special Education Support Will Be Available for Students with Disabilities**

The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on our students with disabilities. The Academic Recovery Plan will make every resource available to better support students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), from our youngest learners to students preparing for graduation:

- We will launch afterschool and Saturday programs for students with IEPs to receive additional instruction and related services.
- We will add 800 Special Education Pre-K seats and expand Committees on Preschool Special Education to review more IEP requests.
- We will provide eligible students ages 21+ with either continued instruction toward their diploma or other credential, or consultation about plans for college and career readiness.
- We will also continue to provide family workshops and information sessions through our Beyond Access Series, which supports families of students with disabilities by providing sessions on topics related to special education.

### More Language Support Will Be Available to Multilingual Learners

Multilingual learners (MLs) and immigrant families are valued and supported at DOE. We will provide culturally responsive supports that give students and their families equitable access to resources and opportunities that help students succeed inside and outside the classroom.

- We will establish Immigrant Ambassador Programs across 30 high schools to match immigrant DOE students with college students for mentorship.
- Schools will be provided resources to purchase print and digital books in students’ home languages, and build home language libraries.
- We will provide teachers with training that is specific to the language needs of multilingual learners and immigrant students.
- We will conduct wellness checks and deliver social-emotional learning support to multilingual learners, particularly in transitioning to full time in-person learning.
- We will expand the Postsecondary Readiness for ELLs Program (PREP), to be facilitated by a select group of school counselors and educators.

### Your Child Will Get Ready for College and Career

Especially as our students heal from the pandemic, we need to make sure they are better prepared for the next step in life, whether it’s college or career.

- We will deliver free, personalized college counseling for every junior and senior after school so that every student has a post-graduation plan. This includes launching Student Success Centers for 34 high schools.
- We will offer Universal College Financial Aid Guidance in multiple languages, to help navigate the application process.
- We will add new Advanced Placement or College Now courses so tens of thousands more students have access to college-level coursework.

### Your Child Will Learn Challenging Material That Reflects Who They Are

Children are more engaged in class when they can see themselves in their lessons and materials. We are committed to reflecting the city’s “beautiful mosaic” of cultures and histories in curriculum.

- In the fall, your child’s school will receive an infusion of books that reflect the variety of histories, languages, and experiences that make up the city.
- The DOE will begin work on universal, rigorous, and inclusive English Language Arts (ELA) and Math curricula that will be shared by New York City’s 1,600 schools and one million students. It will be built on investments in literacy and will challenge students to move beyond their academic comfort zones.
- The DOE will begin developing brand new support materials for ELA, Math, Arts and more, developed by New York City educators for New York City students.

To view a copy of this document in your language, visit [schools.nyc.gov/messagesforfamilies](https://schools.nyc.gov/messagesforfamilies)

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