

August 6, 2020

Dear Families,

The educators and staff at your child's school, and all of us at the DOE, continue to work around the clock to prepare for a safe and healthy return to school in September. An important part of our planning depends on you! Today I am writing with additional information and an important reminder as we head into September.

All schools are currently preparing for a blended learning model. Blended learning means that students learn part of the time in-person in school buildings, and continue their learning remotely, from home, on the remaining weekdays. Any family can also choose all-remote learning this fall, for any reason. **If all-remote learning is your preference, we ask to hear from you by filling out a short web form at schools.nyc.gov/returntoschool2020, or by calling 311, by this Friday, August 7.** If you begin in blended learning, you can decide later to transition to all-remote, but to best support schools in their planning for reopening, we ask that those who have a preference for 100% remote notify us by this Friday, August 7.

FILL OUT A SHORT FORM
NOW IF YOU WOULD LIKE
TO CONTINUE
ALL-REMOTE LEARNING
THIS FALL

As you consider which learning model is best for your child, I want to restate our guiding principles that apply to every student's education: All students will be learning five days a week, and teachers will continue to deliver high-quality instruction that is culturally responsive, rigorous and developmentally appropriate for all students, in all learning settings.

We are sharing additional information below about both blended and all-remote instruction to empower you to make this choice. This builds on the information contained in the letter sent to families in late July comparing remote and blended learning, which you can find at schools.nyc.gov/messagesforfamilies.

Types of Teaching and Learning

Whether your child is participating in blended learning or learning 100 percent remotely, they will receive instruction by 1) interacting live with their teachers and 2) by independently completing assignments and projects throughout the school day and week.

Teachers

Students engaged in remote learning will, for the most part, be taught by teachers from their school community. While there may be limited exceptions on a school-by-school basis, parents can expect their children to be assigned teachers from their school community when they receive their children's full schedules before the school year begins.

Live Interaction

Teachers will provide daily live instruction for our fully remote learners, as well as for those students participating in the blended learning model. Teachers will deliver live instruction in short intervals (15–



20 consecutive minutes) throughout the school day for our youngest learners and may increase in length based on the student's developmental stage and grade level. We will share additional information on live instruction in the coming weeks.

Posting Schedules

Schools will post class schedules and schedules for live instruction for all students—those fully remote as well as those participating in blended learning—online. You will have access to these schedules in advance so you can plan your work and family commitments. Schools will also ensure students have sufficient time for high-quality interactions with their teachers and classmates.

Direct Support

Teachers will have dedicated time every school day to engage with students and families via video conference or telephone. We encourage you to take advantage of this time to get guidance and updates related to your child's progress and learning.

Lunch in the Classroom

In-person student lunch will be instructional time in most instances, modeled on our Breakfast in the Classroom program. In elementary schools, for example, during lunch, students will take part in learning activities that are fun, engaging, and enriching, such as interactive read-alouds, social-emotional learning, and content through music. In middle and high schools, during lunch, students will engage with a specific content area. Schools will maintain all health and safety guidelines for in-person learning and for consuming food and drink during this time.

Community Building

All students will have routines that build community, center the day, and set them up for success. This will provide all students with community- and relationship-building experiences that are an integral part of a typical school community. For example, this may consist of a daily morning meeting where the teacher engages students in activities related to social-emotional wellness and community-building, or a daily closing activity where the teacher recaps the learning for the day, and gets students prepared for the following day. Schools and teachers will share more about this as we approach the first day of school.

Social-Emotional Support

We know that current circumstances in the pandemic have been very difficult for you and your children. Students have been isolated from their teachers, classmates, and school communities. For this reason, we will allow time for teachers, school-based staff, and students to readjust to being in school buildings and to adapt to changes. In addition, we will integrate social-emotional activities and trauma-informed care into academic subjects to the greatest extent possible throughout the day. We will also prioritize mental health supports throughout the school year.

Grading

All students must meet the same academic requirements, whether they are engaged in fully remote or blended learning. The teacher overseeing your child's classwork is responsible for designing or selecting assessments to measure student progress. These may include projects, exams administered within or outside the online platform, portfolios, and other measures of student mastery.



**Department of
Education**

Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

There is no doubt that we have all learned a lot since March—both about the virus, and about our ability to keep learning going during this unprecedented time. That is why we won't settle for anything but the most rigorous and engaging instructional experience for your child, in whatever learning model you choose. Your needs—along with those of your children and the staff who serve them—continue to be at the center of our back-to-school planning.

We will send more information in the coming days and weeks. As always, we encourage you to check schools.nyc.gov/returntoschool2020 for the latest information on what the next year will bring.

Thank you for being part of the DOE family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard A. Carranza'.

Richard A. Carranza
Chancellor

New York City Department of Education