

March 22, 2020

Dear Families,

Tomorrow, we will all come together to take the first steps of a huge new educational journey as New York City brings remote learning to our 1.1 million students.

While none of us could have predicted even a few weeks ago that we would launch this dramatic new transition in education, I could not be prouder of the way our educators have come together to ready themselves to teach your children from their own homes. And I could not be more grateful to all of you for your faith in our educators, and all of the hardworking staff at DOE.

This will not be perfect. Nothing can ever replace a talented teacher in a classroom. We know the challenges and inequities our students face. But over the past week I have seen DOE's 150,000 staff rise to this challenge in astounding ways. Your faith in them is deserved and earned.

Things have moved very quickly since Mayor de Blasio and I made the very difficult decision one week ago that school buildings would close for student instruction until at least April 20. Educators citywide created a remote curriculum in days. Every school has been equipped with an online platform. Learning resources, including those for special education and multilingual learners, have been developed and posted on our website—and there is so much more to come.

All the relevant information you need about engaging in remote learning is on our website at schools.nyc.gov—please visit it frequently for updates. And please check in with your teachers and principals if you have questions: just as they were before last week, they will continue to be your guide to instruction and (virtual) engagement during these unprecedented times. I will share a few key pieces of information here to keep in mind for this week:

- Remote Learning: Each school has its own online platform, with many schools using Google Classroom. Educators have contacted school communities to let you know what remote learning tool your child's school will be using.
 - You can find instructions on DOE student accounts and getting started in Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams at schools.nyc.gov/learnathome.
 - If you are having additional problems connecting, contact your school directly via email. Our Find a School tool can help you find contact info for your school as well, if you do not already have it: schools.nyc.gov/find-a-school.
- Electronic Devices: If your child needs an internet-connected device to participate in remote learning, and you have not yet filled out a device request form, please visit coronavirus.schools.nyc/RemoteLearningDevices to request a device on loan from DOE.

- Many of you have already received a device on loan from your school. If you have not and you still require a device, please fill out the survey. Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs): If your student is recommended for integrated co-teaching, special class, or special education teacher support services, your school will make every effort to arrange for them to continue to receive instruction from the same special education teachers and classroom paraprofessionals that usually teach them. Someone from your school will contact you to discuss how instruction will be delivered.
 - Your child’s IEP meetings will still take place; IEP meetings will be conducted by phone. To make a referral for initial evaluation or reevaluation, you can email your principal or specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov, or call 311.
 - For more on remote learning for students with IEPs, please visit schools.nyc.gov/learnathome.
- Free Meals: We will continue to offer free meals in the weeks ahead at more than 400 sites across the city. Food hubs will operate Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. through 1:30 p.m., and any student of any age can get 3 meals daily. Visit schools.nyc.gov/freemeals to find a site near you.
- Regional Enrichment Centers: On Monday, March 23, the City will open Regional Enrichment Centers (RECs) for the children of front-line workers in the fight against COVID-19—including first responders and healthcare workers. If you believe your child may be eligible to attend a REC, please visit schools.nyc.gov/recs.
- Enrollment and Placement Support: Family Welcome Center staff are available by email, and are prepared to assist with enrollment and placement of new admissions, questions around admissions, information about offers, and waitlists. They do not handle REC enrollment.
 - Please be aware FWCs are processing a high volume of questions at this time in connection to the recent release of high school admissions offer letters. We ask for your patience, and are aiming to respond to all requests within 48 hours. Here’s how to receive direct support on these topics:
 - Bronx: bronxfwc@schools.nyc.gov
 - Brooklyn: brooklynfwc@schools.nyc.gov
 - Manhattan: manhattanfwc@schools.nyc.gov
 - Queens: queensfwc@schools.nyc.gov
 - Staten Island: statenislandfwc@schools.nyc.gov

Parents can also call 311 and say “Schools” to be routed to someone who can help with school-related questions.

If you need help with a problem that cannot be resolved at the school level or wish to report a complaint, please reach out to your district superintendent's office. Contact information for your district support team can be found here: schools.nyc.gov/about-us/leadership/district-leadership. If you do not know the district in which your child's school is located, please use the Find A School tool: schools.nyc.gov/find-a-school.

There will surely be bumps in the road as we all adjust to this new reality, and I want to thank you for the patience that will be demanded of you as we undertake this transformation together.

In just a few hours, we will all take a great leap together into uncharted territory. We will be successful if we continue to work together as a community of families, educators, and staff. We all share two key goals: a high-quality education for every single one of our 1.1 million students, and protecting health and safety of everyone in our school communities.

That means that public education in New York City is going to look tremendously different for the foreseeable future. But together, we will chart this path forward, and I have no doubt that we will eventually look back and say this was our finest hour: when we confronted this great challenge and overcame it, in unity, with shared strength and commitment.

New York City has the greatest students and staff in the world, and nothing will ever change that—today, tomorrow, or ever. I am excited to be on this journey with you. Together, I am confident we will learn and grow with boundless potential.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Carranza
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education