

June 22, 2022

Dear Families,

After six months as your New York City Schools Chancellor, I feel enormous gratitude as we approach the end of the school year. In that short period of time, you helped me begin to realize my vision of empowering our families to be genuine partners in the decisions we make together for our students. Your input is shaping everything we are doing in our schools, and we can all see the difference!

Think back to when I first started on January 3, at the height of the Omicron variant surge, when our attendance rate was only 65 percent. We implemented a variety of measures to improve safety called Stay Safe, Stay Open. That included increased testing and offering highly successful vaccinations on-site for our students.

By the end of January and continuing since then, our attendance returned to nearly 90 percent. After more than two years of upheaval and trauma caused by the pandemic, our families, students, and staff deserve so much credit for persevering and enabling us to end this school year on such a high note!

All of the initiatives that we announced in recent months are the result of input from our families and will be developed in partnership with them. Those include our improved literacy instruction and dyslexia interventions, violence interruption programming to improve safety, expanded access to gifted and talented programs, and a variety of new efforts to enable our high school students to gain skills valued in the workforce.

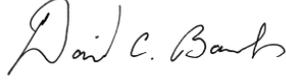
We are relying on our families because I have learned throughout my lifelong career as a New York City educator that the best ideas and most successful initiatives arise from conversations with families. You know the needs of your children and the strengths and weaknesses of your schools better than anyone. I have been preaching to everyone throughout our school system that they need to seriously engage with families and respond effectively to their concerns. No more imposing big changes without first seeking meaningful feedback from our families.

For those reasons, we are streamlining our school system and opening up clearer channels of communication with our leaders. That includes empowering our local district superintendents and school principals so that families can more directly and easily communicate with those in charge. In recent weeks, families across the city have had opportunities to meet at town halls with finalists for the 45 New York City public school superintendent positions to ensure that the most qualified and effective individuals fill those vital roles. Thanks to your feedback, I am confident that you will be excited about the leader of your district starting July 1; you can learn more at schools.nyc.gov/about-us/leadership/district-leadership.

I hope you'll agree that we're listening, we hear you, and together we're building a new future for New York City schools! As you enjoy the summer, I hope that you and your children will take advantage of all the amazing cultural and recreational opportunities the city has to offer.

Have a safe and fun summer. The best is yet to come as we advance toward the 2022-23 school year!

Soaring high,



David C. Banks
New York City Schools Chancellor

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