

January 22, 2021

Dear Families,

I hope the new year is treating you and your loved ones well and that your children are settling back into their learning routines. There are a lot of great things happening in our public schools this month!

First, we are committed to continuing to improve teaching and learning during this unprecedented school year. Your feedback is key to this effort. This week, we launched our School Experience Survey to learn about our students' and families' experiences with remote and in-person learning this school year. Our goal is to use that feedback to improve learning for the rest of the year. Families of children in grades 3-K – 12, and students in grades 6 – 12 can go right now to schools.nyc.gov/experiencesurvey to tell us what you think!

Second, you may be aware that we are making some important changes to our elementary, middle, and high school admissions processes to better serve all our students. These changes will help us continue to move toward a better, more equitable school system that helps every student succeed.

In the Update for Families below, you will find additional information on these new admissions policies, as well as on the School Experience Survey.

In other news, I want to share that we have delivered 450,000 free devices to students since last spring to help them with their remote learning. We have 50,000 more devices on the way. Need a device? Ask your school. You no longer need to fill out an online form; your school will help you through the process to receive one.

The free COVID-19 vaccine is also in the news, and you probably wonder when and where you can get yours. New Yorkers age 65 or older and certain frontline essential workers, including school and childcare staff, are now eligible to get the vaccine. Eligible New Yorkers can reserve their appointment by calling (877) VAX-4NYC or by visiting nyc.gov/VaccineFinder. You can also access up-to-date information about who is eligible anytime at nyc.gov/vaccinecommandcenter. COVID-19 vaccines are not yet being administered to children under age 16; however, we will communicate if and when children under age 16 are eligible to receive it.

Thank you again for partnering with us to ensure that all our students receive the best education possible in the greatest city in the world.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Carranza
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education



**Department of
Education**

Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

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Update for Families, January 22, 2021

Fall 2020 School Experience Survey

We want to know about your experience with remote and in-person learning during the current school year. Now through February 5, please share your opinions via the Survey by visiting schools.nyc.gov/experiencesurvey.

The survey collects feedback from families, students, and teachers about remote learning, communication, technology use, and health, safety, and instruction for those students and teachers who attended school or worked in person at any point this school year. Your feedback will help us understand student needs and improve remote and in-person learning for the rest of the school year.

The survey is open to families and teachers of students in grades 3-K–12, and students in grades 6–12. The survey is available in English, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Urdu. All feedback provided is anonymous and confidential.

Anyone who cannot complete the survey online can call 311 to find support to complete the survey by phone. The survey closes on Friday, February 5, and we want to hear from you!

Middle and High School Admissions

Middle school applications opened January 14 and high school applications opened January 20. This year we've made some changes to better support our students' learning journeys and to ensure a fairer process for all our public school families.

Middle Schools

Students in their final year of elementary school can now apply to middle school! The deadline to apply is February 9. As the DOE shared in December, middle schools that formerly evaluated (“screened”) applicants for admissions will not use academic records, auditions, or other screens or assessments to evaluate or admit students this year. This pause on screening will be in effect for all 70,000 fifth graders entering middle school this fall.

- Eligibility requirements (which students can apply to a specific school) and admissions priorities (the order that student groups are admitted to that school) are not changing. Students will continue to have priority to attend middle schools close to where they live or attend elementary school. If any middle school program has more applicants than available seats, offers will be made to that program by lottery and using any admissions priorities the school has (e.g., for students with disabilities or multilingual learners. This is how most middle school programs in New York City already admit students.
- We will engage school communities to help inform the use of screens for future years.

We decided to pause on middle school screens this year because the measures our screened schools previously used to make admissions decisions were no longer available due to the pandemic. In addition,



the COVID-19 health crisis has had a disproportionate impact on our communities of color, immigrant families, and other traditionally underserved communities. Pausing on screens for admissions this year will help create more inclusive learning environments and more opportunities for all our City's students.

To learn more about middle school admissions, please visit schools.nyc.gov/middle.

High Schools

Now that the high school application is open, you will be able to apply online at MySchools.nyc or through your school counselor. The deadline to apply is February 23.

Also, if you have not done so yet, you can still register for Specialized High Schools admissions; learn how at schools.nyc.gov/SHS.

- To apply to any of the eight testing schools, register as soon as possible to take the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test. All current eighth-graders who registered by the January 15 deadline will take the test on January 27. You can still register through January 28 to take the test on a later testing date. Registrations will not be accepted after January 28.
- To apply to LaGuardia High School's arts programs, register by February 23 to audition for LaGuardia High School. Please note that all high school auditions this year—including for LaGuardia High School—will take place virtually. You can find updated requirements for audition programs at schools.nyc.gov/HSAuditions.

As part of a larger effort to make the high school admissions process simpler and more equitable for families, geographic (location-based) admissions priorities for high schools will be phased out over the next two years. This means that, after next year, the location of a student's home cannot alone determine their chances of getting into a certain high school.

Attend Virtual Arts High School Fairs

Interested in arts programs? Join us at any of these events to learn about audition requirements for each discipline, the audition process for this year, and how to submit your audition online. This is also a chance to meet representatives from NYC's audition schools, including LaGuardia High School. Please note that schools from different boroughs will join and present on different dates. At the end of the event, school and DOE staff will answer your questions.

To learn more about high school admissions generally, visit schools.nyc.gov/high.

Changes to Gifted & Talented Programs

Last week, we announced that this will be the last year New York City administers the current Gifted & Talented test to four year-olds. We believe there is a better way to serve our young learners.

- We will spend the next year engaging communities around what kind of programming they would like to see that is more inclusive and enriching, and truly supports the needs of diversely talented students at different ages.

- We will also engage communities around how best to integrate enriched learning opportunities to more students, so that every student can access rigorous learning that is tailored to their needs and fosters their creativity, passion, and strengths.

Students currently in Gifted & Talented programs, including those entering programs this fall, will be able to complete their elementary school program. Information on this year's test will be posted in the coming weeks on the DOE website and shared with school communities.