

Innovation • Inspiration • Excellence for All

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Dr. Edwin M. Quezada
Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Yonkers Public Schools Learning Community,

Welcome to the 2021-2022 school year! An exciting and productive year is ahead that is about to begin in September as we restore 5 days of in-person learning. We invite you to be intentional about your commitment to do your part to make this the best year for Yonkers students, families and staff. Everyone in-person, in school, every day. Our schools are ready to create conditions for ALL students' success.

The challenges of the past year and a half from COVID-19 have taught us how to be resourceful, flexible and brave. Most of all, we learned that this virus does not discriminate, it affects everyone, and we must continue to be vigilant to keep our community as healthy as possible. Please consider getting vaccinated, it is your best defense. To maintain a healthy safe school environment, to the best of our ability, everyone is required to wear a mask/face covering inside schools, on District transportation and in District facilities. Temperature checks will be done daily. There will be random COVID-19 surveillance testing screening of students with parental permission who are unvaccinated and vaccinated, and vaccinated staff with consent. Unvaccinated staff must provide COVID-19 testing results as [required by Board of Education policy](#). No COVID-19 Attestation Questionnaire are required this year.

Teaching and learning will be robust, enriched and grounded to address the academic and, most importantly, the social-emotional needs of students, staff and families. Everyone has been significantly impacted over the last year and a half. The [Yonkers Public Schools 3 Year Strategic Plan 2019-2022](#) reminds us that our objective as a learning community must be educational equity and access for *all* children. The District's mission, core values and goals, as identified in our 3 Year Strategic Plan, remain constant. Our students today more than ever need to be surrounded by caring adults ready on day one to address their educational needs and growth. Together, we can transform learning to transform our children's lives.

Restoration, Renewal and Hope will drive our efforts over the next several years. Restoration begins with our instructional programs prekindergarten through grade 12 that in recent years consistently fostered 90% high school graduation rates. Our budget restores over 160 employees including administrators, school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, teachers including art, music, physical education, career and technical education, special education and English language learners, as well as clericals and custodians. We restored proper ventilation in all schools and the windows are as operationally designed. In addition, we have expanded our technology capabilities. The next step is to renew our commitment to make the school system better for students, families and our staff, and to renew a collaborative mindset among all stakeholders. The result is hope for new beginnings for our students and community; we accomplish this by building on our District's proven strengths. This is our charge; our students depend on us to ensure that restoration, renewal, and hope leads to a bright future for ALL children.

Renewal starts with our return to full in-person attendance for all children and staff following the District's calendar. This will be accomplished safely following Centers for Disease (CDC) and [New York State Education Department guidance](#) (NYSED). Our objective is to successfully improve the lives of our children and young adults, and to that end we must:

- Accept our individual responsibility for the safety and well-being of others,
- Realize that good teaching must occur in every school, every classroom, and every day,
- Recognize that student and staff attendance are essential to learning,
- Understand that learning occurs best with robust social-emotional programs and when guided by a multi-tier system of support,
- Utilize Restorative Practices to support self-discipline and change inappropriate behavior,
- Commit to an enriched Culturally Responsive Sustaining Education curricula,
- Incorporate The Arts and extra-curricular activities in schools offering students access to new opportunities,
- Appreciate that early childhood education is the foundation for child's success, and
- Embrace Parents as Partners.

These drivers help to create a school culture where everyone feels valued, respected and cared for. It takes each individual in the learning community to reflect on their role and embed these expectations in every action taken every day. This is how we transform learning and transform our students lives.

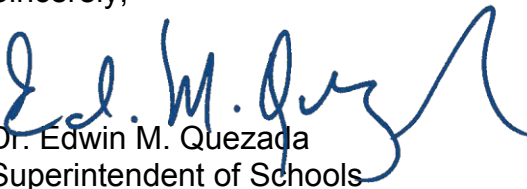
Last year, there were many triumphs for the Yonkers Public Schools. Once again, we want to take this opportunity to thank our educators, students, parents/guardians, non-instructional staff and community. Together, we ensured from September 2020 instruction occurred every day in every school, and from October through June, instruction seamlessly continued when we welcomed students into our schools. We must celebrate the power of collaboration.

This summer, phenomenal programs provided successful in-person only instruction for almost 4,000 elementary and secondary students. Everyone adhered to the CDC and NYSED safety and mitigation protocols. Accolades came from students, educators and parents. These programs provided academic supports, enriched integrated arts instruction and a dynamic social emotional learning component. They will serve as a model for this school year when all students return to their full schedules of classes.

[Attached to this letter is a quick guide to Opening Schools September 2021.](#) Please review this document and feel free to speak to your Principal if you have questions. We urge everyone to join our campaign – Restoration, Renewal and Hope. Find your own path to contribute to this year's successes and triumphs; our students need their school, their teachers and their classmates.

We are #YPSUnstoppable. Our students deserve nothing less!

Sincerely,


Dr. Edwin M. Quezada
Superintendent of Schools


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