



July 17, 2020

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RE: **Reopening Yonkers Public Schools September 2020**

**Dr. Edwin M. Quezada**  
Superintendent of Schools

Dear Yonkers Public Schools Learning Community,

Every school year we begin with great enthusiasm ready to build on proven student achievement and success. There are many for which we should be very proud; I offer highlights below. The 2020-2021 school year will be no different.

Relentlessly, we have and will continue to confront the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the newly awakened demands for societal change for equal treatment and rights for all people, being culturally responsive to our underrepresented population. These events have changed each of us and the institutions that serve the public good. To prepare for our students' future, we must reflect on these experiences and use the knowledge we have gained since March to ensure our learning community is a safe and just environment for every individual.

In March, when school buildings closed, our learning community was presented with tremendous challenges, and then confronted them with creativity and grit. It was not easy, nor was it perfect, yet our students and staff remained safe and, for the most part, engaged in teaching and learning.

Educators adjusted to Distance Learning and remote instruction. Parents/guardians and family members took on the role of teacher. Students became independent learners. I want to express my sincere thanks and gratitude for the flexibility, determination and resilience demonstrated by our parents/guardians, school leaders, faculty and staff across our schools and central office, and most importantly our students.

Your partnership in this work is valued, needed and appreciated. There are enormous challenges before us in 2020 and throughout the decade ahead. I am confident that by working together, solutions driven by our students' needs and our core values will propel Yonkers Public Schools to an even greater trajectory of outstanding student achievement in a large city school district. And, we will achieve equity and access for all children and employees.

The week of July 20, we will launch **Reopening Yonkers Public Schools September 2020**, which as a clearing house of factual information about the District's ongoing plans for a safe return to in person instruction following the New York State Education and Health Department guidelines. Our priority continues to be the health and well-being of our students, employees, families as well as community members working in our schools. We encourage you to use the website and provide input for the plans.

Rest and rejuvenate this summer; I look forward to seeing you in September.

Sincerely,

Dr. Edwin M. Quezada

C: President Rev. Steve Lopez, Vice President Judith Ramos-Meier and Trustees of the Board of Education

## Highlights from the 2019-2020 School Year...

### From March through June because of collective efforts:

- Our educators, in a matter of weeks, initiated Distance Learning to provide remote instruction.
- The [District's Distance Learning website](#) was launched.
- 5,390 hardcopy packets of instructional materials were distributed to students.
- 221,041 breakfast and lunch meals were served to our students.
- 1,000 bags of groceries, fruits and vegetables that were donated by Yonkers Public Schools employees, community members and Feeding Westchester were received by our families.
- 2,000 laptops and tablets were loaned to our families to support learning at home.
- Childcare was available to Yonkers healthcare workers and first responders.
- The Class of 2020 graduated 1,729 students who may not have had the traditional rites of passage during their senior year, yet they maintained their focus and completed course work to earn their diploma. These graduates earned:
  - 380 advanced Regents designations,
  - 56 students were conferred the prestigious International Baccalaureate diploma,
  - 145 received the Seal of Biliteracy,
  - \$134 million in scholarships,
  - Respectful of social distancing, every school hosted grand outdoor events for seniors to receive memorabilia with raves from graduates and families, and the celebrations culminated with pre-recorded virtual commencement exercises.