

5 EQUITY QUESTIONS FOR 2021 SCHOOL REOPENINGS

School reopening in fall 2021 should be stronger than 2020. However, there will still be challenges, especially as it relates to ensuring all students and their families have the resources that they need to be successful. Regardless of how our children attend school — in person, hybrid, or remote — there are a few things that matter the most to us, including the assurance that our children are physically and psychologically safe, and that they have the resources and support to accelerate academically.

New York school districts have received unprecedented funding from the state and federal governments. This historic funding provides an opportunity for schools to address longstanding educational inequities that were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important that parents have the information that they need to ensure that their child's school and school district are held accountable for using this significant increase in funding to provide better educational equity this school year.

Here are five questions to help you learn more about your school district's plans to use the new funding:

1

What key investments are being prioritized with the new funding in my child's school district?



- How will the district address the unique needs of students from low-income backgrounds, students experiencing homelessness, English language learners, and students with disabilities?
- Where can I provide ideas or input on how new funding should be spent?

2

How will families be engaged regarding budget priorities and new policies in my child's school district?



Parents play a critical role in the educational process. According to state statute, your school district should include you in the critical decisions that affect your child and their school, and all information should be provided in your family's preferred language. Ask your district:

- What upcoming parent meetings and events are being held this school year?
- As things change throughout the year, will families receive new information in their home language and how will we be included in the decision-making process?
- Where do I submit feedback about how things are going for our family and how is such feedback used to make improvements?

3

How will lost instructional time be addressed, and how will I know that my child is making progress?



- What tutoring services and other academic supports will be available to my child?
- What opportunities will my child have for enrichment during non-school hours (after school, summer, weekend academies)?
- What is the school's grading policy and how will I know if my child is academically on track?
- How will my child's academic needs be tracked and monitored throughout the school year?
- How will teachers know what my child's needs are, academically?

4

How will the school support my child socially and emotionally?

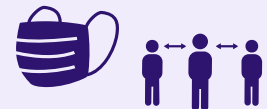


Many students experienced emotional trauma throughout the pandemic and are still trying to make sense of the new world around them. All students need to feel emotionally safe in order to focus on learning. Your child's school should provide students with resources to support their social and emotional well-being. Consider asking:

- Have you adopted any restorative justice practices?
- What types of social-emotional learning resources and training will you provide to school staff this school year?
- Will guidance counselors and social workers be available to students? Are these staff members trauma-informed and representative of the school's student population?
- What emotional support resources will be available to students who have mental health needs?
- Will there be modified discipline policies to support the trauma experienced during the pandemic?
- Are there any new discipline policies being implemented that we should be aware of?

5

How will my child's school ensure that everyone stays healthy?



Safety is a top priority for parents and you should feel comfortable asking questions about how your child's school intends to ensure a healthy school environment. Ask:

- How many children are in each of my child's classes and are there any rules for social distancing? How often will the school be deep cleaned and what efforts has the school taken to improve air quality throughout the building?
- In the event that someone tests positive for COVID-19, what will be the protocols to limit its spread and how will I be notified?
- Will the school provide masks for students?