

Dear Ascend Families:

Thank you for your ongoing support as we continue to navigate this unprecedented academic year together. Based on the current and evolving status of public health in our community, ***Ascend has made the difficult decision to delay our previously communicated January reopening plans. All Ascend campuses will remain closed until at least March 9.*** Families whose children are currently attending the Ascend Learning Support Center will receive additional communication.

We understand that while each family within our community has different needs and preferences, Ascend's decisions regarding whether and when to reopen significantly affect us all. That is why we will continue to communicate regularly about how decisions are made and aim to provide your family with as much advance notice as possible about Ascend's plans.

The current nationwide surge in the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our borough and neighborhoods. Public health experts are predicting that despite the recent approval and distribution of two highly effective vaccines, we will continue to see a rise in community transmission over the next month. While we are confident that the health and safety measures implemented at our campuses will prevent the spread of the virus within our schools, the rapidly increasing community spread outside of our walls cannot be ignored. Thus, we believe a reopening of our campuses in January would likely be followed by frequent closures of classrooms and campuses in response to student or staff exposure and related mandatory quarantine protocols. We know that these types of last-minute closures are especially challenging for families and staff as we all scramble to make alternate arrangements with less than 24 hours to plan.

Additionally, per our most recent survey, the majority of Ascend families continue to express their preference for remote learning. We are happy to report that a great many students have adapted well to this mode of learning. However, we know that remote learning continues to be a struggle for some. We also believe that there is simply no better learning experience than what Ascend offers when we can be in-person together in our beautiful classrooms. Therefore, as soon as we safely and effectively can, we will move ahead with a limited reopening of our campuses.

We continue to be so grateful for your flexibility and patience as we continue our journey together through this unique academic year. All of us at Ascend are focused on a strong, supportive education for your child every day. We wish you and your family a healthy and joyful winter break and look forward to that post-pandemic day in the future when we can welcome all of our students back to campus.

As always, if you have any additional questions or would like to discuss your child's learning experience, please contact your school leader.

In partnership,
Lisa Margosian
Interim CEO