

August 11, 2020

Dear Ascend families,

Thank you for your continued support of our Ascend community. We had over 700 participants at our three family town hall events held on July 31. Your comments, questions, and suggestions have been instrumental in determining our approach to how we'll begin the 2020-2021 academic year. **Within the coming week we will share a detailed return to school guide** with you that will answer many of the questions raised during our meetings and connect you with additional resources.

In the interim, we wanted to share with you that all Ascend schools will begin the academic year in full remote learning mode. This means that **all students will learn at home at least through October 16**. Student and family orientations and technology training will be scheduled for the week of August 31-September 4. The first day of school for grades K-9 will be September 8 and grades 10-12 will begin on September 9. At the end of September, we will review and adjust this plan based on community health status and guidance from public health officials. We will communicate any changes to the next phase of our plan no later than October 2.

We recognize that we are entering an academic year with unprecedented challenges. As a nation, we are wrestling with a global pandemic that continues to have a disproportionate impact on communities of color, most especially Brooklyn which remains one of the most disproportionately impacted communities in the nation. While the Governor of New York has stated that schools in New York may reopen as long as current transmission rates remain below 5%, the Mayor of New York City has set a more conservative threshold at 3%. The New York City Department of Education has delayed their decision about reopening school and the availability of yellow buses until late August or early September. Launching the school year remotely will allow us to adequately prepare our families and staff for new safety procedures while monitoring the spread of the disease in Brooklyn as the city reopens. Our decision to begin the school year remote takes into account this broader context and our families' input.

Until on-campus learning is available, we are committed to providing every student with high-quality remote learning education. Our remote learning model includes:

- **One-to-one technology:** Every student will have access to a laptop. For families without reliable access to the internet, we will support you with accessing free services from local providers or hotspots.
- **Exceptional instruction:** Skilled teachers will deliver live and online high-quality lessons.
- **Daily access to a teacher and classmates:** Your child will have access to their teacher(s) five days a week.
- **Consistent daily schedule:** Students will follow a consistent schedule, allowing you to plan ahead and establish routines.
- **Free meal distribution:** We will offer free meals for pick-up to all families.

Please watch for our email and website updates. You can reach out to us by contacting your school's leaders by email or by phone for the fastest response. You can also email the Ascend network office at info@ascendlearning.org.

Thank you for continued support of our Ascend community. Wishing you health and safety.

Sincerely,

Lisa Margosian
Interim CEO