

February 26, 2021

Dear Families,

I hope you and your families are keeping safe and healthy. I'm writing today with some important news.

After three years leading the DOE, I will be stepping down as Chancellor in March.

I am full of mixed emotions to leave the DOE family. It has been the honor of my career to serve you, and help your child's school and our whole system get closer to reaching its full potential. The strength and resilience of your children—our 1 million students—is awe-inspiring. It is what drove me through this unprecedented crisis, and it is what I take with me as I leave this post. The commitment and support you have shown to your children, and to your school communities, is incredible.

Throughout my career, my guiding light has been the belief that public education is the most powerful equalizer for children. Public education anchors communities. Public education makes it possible for a child who is poor, or who lives in temporary housing, or—in my own case—who doesn't speak English when they enter the public school system to develop their dreams, and then to chase them. Truly, it is public education that expresses the highest ideals of our democracy. My time in New York City has only strengthened this belief, as I have seen it play out time and again, in schools all across the boroughs.

And together, we have seen proof. Our seniors kept breaking their own records as graduation rates and college enrollment kept rising higher, and the dropout rate kept getting lower.

We also made true progress in dismantling the structures and policies that are the products of decades of entrenched racism in the city and country. We have worked to undo segregation and turn “equity” from an esoteric concept to a reality. Every school that no longer screens children for admission, and every district that uses DOE resources to create more space for low-income students, or English language learners, is making this mission real.

We finally brought the mental health of our children into the spotlight and made it a major priority so that every child can feel welcomed, comfortable, and safe in their classroom and school community—especially now, when so many of our students are dealing with unforeseeable trauma.

And, of course, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic we transformed the nation's largest school system overnight in order to protect the health of our students, staff, families, and communities. We have reinvented what it means to teach and learn in New York City public schools.

All throughout, I have been proud to prioritize what's best for kids over what's politically popular. I have never been afraid of hard conversations. I have always believed that we need to set a high bar for every student—and then do what it takes to help them meet it.

You, your children, and the dedicated staff who serve you deserve both continuity and courageous leadership from your next Chancellor. You need someone who knows firsthand the reality on the ground at our schools, and has the talent and leadership to finish the school year out strong and drive towards bringing every child back to buildings in September.

That is why I am so proud that one of the most important leaders in this work will take on the privilege and responsibility of being your next Chancellor: Meisha Porter.



Department of
Education

Chancellor Richard A. Carranza

Meisha is a 20-year veteran of New York City public schools, and currently serves as Bronx Executive Superintendent. In this role, she leads community school districts 7-12, covering the entire borough and its 361 schools and 235,000 students. She is a lifelong New Yorker and product of our public schools who first joined the Department of Education as a teacher at the Bronx School for Law, Government, and Justice—a school she helped conceive. After 18 years at the school, where she became Principal, Meisha spent three years as Superintendent of District 11, serving the Pelham Parkway, Eastchester, and Woodlawn neighborhoods of the Bronx. She has been Executive Superintendent since 2018, and in that time, the students of the Bronx have achieved significant academic gains, and schools have gotten stronger and stronger.

Meisha is an unparalleled warrior for our students and our schools. She attended them, she taught in them, she led them, and now she will be Chancellor for ALL of them. None of the last several Chancellors—myself included—have been actively working with our schools, day in and day out, at the time they were appointed. Meisha will break the mold, bringing all her experience, past and present, to support you and your children. You will be hearing much more from Meisha soon, and I will be working with her over the next several weeks to ensure a smooth and productive transition.

More than anything, I am proud to have served you, and so proud of the strides we have made. I don't know what's next for me, but I know I will take the spirit and richness of New York City with me anywhere and everywhere I go.

It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve as your Chancellor. I am grateful to each and every one of you.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Carranza
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education

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