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**WITH GRADUATION RATES RISING, MAYOR DE BLASIO CONGRATULATES
STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS**

*Graduation rate tops 70 percent citywide, dropout rate hits all-time low, college readiness up,
more students than ever enrolling in college*

*Equity and Excellence: City plan to reach 80 percent grad rate, two-thirds college-ready based
on toughest new standards*

NEW YORK—Mayor de Blasio met with students on-track to graduate at the High School for Arts and Business in Corona today, where the graduation rate jumped to top 90 percent for the first time, and graduating students' college readiness increased more than 8 percentage points last year. Mayor de Blasio's Equity and Excellence plan for New York City schools is focused on raising graduation rates and college readiness at all schools citywide.

"Our schools are moving in the right direction. More kids are graduating on time, more of them are college-ready, and fewer are dropping out. As we're raising the bar through our Equity and Excellence plan, we're making sure every student in every school has access to the tools that will help them succeed," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

"These gains are a testament to hard work by New York City students, teachers and administrators. It is particularly notable to see a decrease in the dropout rate across all ethnicities; this represents critical progress, however there is so much more to do to ensure equity and excellence in classrooms across all five boroughs," said **Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña**. "We will continue to be laser-focused on strengthening instruction, expanding opportunities for all students, and engaging families to ensure there is a clear path to college or a meaningful career for all City students."

The Mayor and Chancellor have pledged to meet rigorous benchmarks: 80 percent of our students will graduate from high school on time; two-thirds of them will be truly college-ready, based on the most rigorous new standards aligned with the Common Core; and all students will be reading in 2nd grade.

To meet those targets, Mayor de Blasio has committed to providing every student and every school with critical tools to prepare students for success in college and careers: expanding

Advanced Placement classes to every single school; providing every student with Computer Science classes in elementary, middle and high school; and ensuring all students are on track to take Algebra by the 9th grade. The Mayor also committed to new district-charter school learning partnerships and a College Access for All roadmap for every student. In two historically low-performing districts, the City also launched a new “Single Shepherd” program to provide dedicated support to every family to guide their child from middle school to college.

The graduation rates released this week reflect the graduation and dropout percentages among the cohort of all students who entered 9th grade in the fall of 2011. All percentage point changes below are comparisons to the previous year.

- The graduation rate rose to 70.5 percent in 2014-15, a 2.0 point gain
- The dropout rate fell to 9.0 percent, a decrease of 0.7 points

New York City students’ graduation rates improved across the board, with Latino, Asian, and black students posting higher gains:

- Hispanic students’ graduation rate increased to 64.0 percent, a 2.5 point gain
- Asian students’ graduation rate increased to 85.0 percent, a 2.4 point gain
- Black students’ graduation rate increased to 65.4 percent, a 1.7 point gain
- White students’ graduation rate increased to 82.0 percent, a 1.4 point gain

Simultaneously, dropout rates fell among all ethnicities:

- Hispanic students’ dropout rate fell to 11.9 percent, a 0.8 point decrease
- Asian students’ dropout rate fell to 4.6 percent, a 1.2 point decrease
- Black students’ dropout rate fell to 9.3 percent, a 0.3 point decrease
- White students’ dropout rate fell to 5.2 percent, a 0.9 point decrease

The percentage of Class of 2015 students meeting two college readiness standards – New York State’s *Aspirational Performance Measures* (APM), and New York City’s *College Readiness Index* (CRI) – also grew significantly. Among graduates, the percentage of students meeting the APM standard rose to 42.6 percent, a gain of 3.2 points. Among all students in the 9th grade cohort, the percentage of students meeting the standard rose to 30.1 percent, a gain of 3.1 points. The percentage of graduates meeting the more inclusive CRI standard rose to 49.1 percent, a gain of 1.8 points. Among all students in the 9th grade cohort, the percentage of students meeting the standard rose to 34.6 percent, a gain of 2.1 points.

The increases in graduation and college readiness rates – as well as the decreased dropout rate – build on progress the City announced earlier this school year: 53 percent of the Class of 2014 enrolled in a two- or four-year college, vocational program, or public service program after graduation, the highest percentage ever.

The City announced increases in students’ participation and performance in AP and SAT exams across all ethnicities. New York City seniors’ average math, critical reading, and writing scores

all increased while nationwide average scores on all three components fell. On Advanced Placement, the number of students taking at least one exam rose 8.0 percent, from 39,318 students to a record 42,481 students, and has increased 40.1 percent in the last five years; the number of students passing AP exams also increased 5.9 percent. Participation increases were largest for Black and Hispanic students. The gains in college enrollment and AP and SAT participation and performance reflect the City's ongoing commitment to increasing college readiness and access.

Additionally, as part of its commitment to equity and excellence in college access and planning for all students, the City is implementing the SAT School Day. Starting in the 2016-17 school year, all students will participate in the SAT exam during the school day in the spring of their high school junior year starting in spring 2017. The new SAT School Day removes a number of barriers to SAT participation for students, while also promoting a strong college-going culture by encouraging students to think about college as part of their high school career.

"I want to congratulate the students, parents and teachers at the High School for Arts and Business for all of the hard work they have done. By offering an array of AP courses, arts and business programs, this school captures students' imaginations. Students not only graduate but leave college-ready. It is this kind of progress that we are working to bring to all our high schools," said **Michael Mulgrew, president of the United Federation of Teachers.**

"I want to congratulate Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Farina on this great success," said **Assembly Member Catherine Nolan, Chair of the Committee on Education.** "Their vision to invest in public education has helped raise graduation rates, support our community schools and most importantly provide the necessary resources for our students to succeed."

"One of the greatest assets this city has is its youth, and our ability to prepare them for leadership positions depends on our education system, graduating them on time and ready for college. It is imperative that New York City continue to offer more and greater opportunities to our young people through quality school programming, career advising and mentoring. I am proud of the students and educators at Arts and Business High School, which is an exemplary public school in more ways than one; and I look forward to the growth of the Mayor's Equity and Excellence plan, which has already yielded notable results," said **Council Member Julissa Ferreras-Copeland, Chair of the Committee on Finance.**

"These improved graduation rates are a direct result of our city's investment in public education. I commend Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Fariña for taking measures to ensure that graduation rates continue to climb and that our students are prepared for higher education. I will continue to do all that I can to equip our schools with the resources they need in order to meet and exceed the high standards set by the administration," said **Former NYC public school teacher and Council Member, Daniel Dromm, chair of the Council's Committee on Education.**

"The Equity and Excellence plan implemented by the Mayor, which focuses on college readiness and raising graduation rates, is showing positive results in our students and will continue to encourage increases in graduation by insuring that schools have the critical resources and technology required in order to help support our students so that they can continue to excel.

Students are our future and they deserve all of our support," said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**.

"It is so heartening to see graduation rates rise throughout the city and see students better prepared to take advantage of higher education to seize the opportunities of tomorrow," said **Congressman Joseph Crowley**. "I especially want to congratulate Corona's High School for Arts and Business for stepping up to the challenge and striving to be the best they can be. Our public schools need and deserve the proper resources to succeed and I thank Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Fariña for their commitment to ensuring our students are getting just that."

"The improvements over the last couple of years have been important for our City. I have always believed that if we give our teachers and principals the adequate resources to teach our children, we would see improvements. I applaud the Mayor and Chancellor for the work they have accomplished. As the ranking member of the Senate's Higher Education Committee, I also understand the importance of college readiness. This is a big step in the right direction and I hope to see public education in New York City continue to receive the support it deserves," said **Former NYC public school teacher and State Senator Toby Stavisky**.

"It is great to hear that for the first time, the high school graduation rate in the City has topped 70 percent. However, we still have some homework to do in order to close the gap between graduation rates of white students and those of black and Hispanic students. I want to thank Mayor Bill de Blasio for his efforts to offer a high quality public education for all New York City students, regardless of their zip code," said **State Senator Jose Peralta**.

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