



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

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**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-295

**MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH WARBY PARKER TO PROVIDE FREE EYEGLASSES TO STUDENTS AT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

*Warby Parker, major homegrown NYC tech brand, to donate glasses to 20,000 children over the next four years*

*City dedicating \$10 million to expand free vision screening program to all 130 Community Schools – including all 94 Renewal Schools*

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced that the City will expand its vision screening program to all 130 Community Schools and will partner with Warby Parker to provide a free pair of glasses to every student in need. Based on student needs, the City estimates the NYC-based tech company will provide glasses to approximately 20,000 students over the next four years. The new partnership will strengthen New York City’s Community Schools initiative, which helps students overcome barriers to learning, such as vision impairments that prevent children from reading or seeing the blackboard.

To ensure that every student in need can be served by the program, the City is significantly expanding vision screening to all 130 Community Schools. For the first time, the City is providing free eye tests for students in middle and high school through the Community Schools initiative, as well as to elementary schools. As a result, 65,000 more students will receive vision screening. Mayor de Blasio made the announcement at P.S. 50, a Renewal School in Manhattan that will participate in the program next year. All Renewal Schools are also becoming Community Schools and will integrate academics, social services and supports into the fabric of schools to help them better serve the needs of families.

“For thousands of children who are ready to learn, but whose vision may be holding them back, the future just got clearer and brighter. We are deeply appreciative of Warby Parker’s donation of new eyeglasses to thousands of students at Community and Renewal schools. This is a great new partnership – one of many we are building between homegrown tech companies like Warby Parker and the City to invest in our young people and our future. When NYC’s tech sector brings its expertise and resources into our schools, our students are the big winners,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

“We started Warby Parker with the goal of transforming the eyewear industry by offering an alternative to the overpriced and underwhelming prescription glasses on the market. Since 2010, we’ve been committed to building a business designed to solve problems,” said **Warby Parker co-Founder and co-CEO Dave Gilboa**. “According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, vision disability is the single most prevalent disabling condition among children in the United States. We’ve been actively trying to address this issue and are proud to take steps with the City of New York to do so.”

“Our goal is to provide these students with their first pair of glasses for free so they can experience the immediate and direct positive impact that a pair of glasses can have on their life, especially academics,” said **Warby Parker co-Founder and co-CEO Neil Blumenthal**. “We’re excited to be working in our own

backyard, partnering with the City of New York to ensure that kids get the eye exams they need and the glasses they need to see the chalkboard, do their homework and continue their education.”

“The donation from Warby Parker, along with the City’s new investment, will help us fulfill one of the key components of the Community School model: ensuring that students are healthy and ready to learn. Community Schools and their partner organizations recognize that something as simple as a pair of glasses can be transformative for students in classrooms across the City,” said **Richard Buery, Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives**. “We look forward to working with the team at Warby Parker as they partner with principals, their staffs and Community School Directors across these 130 schools to raise awareness about the importance of vision services.”

“We know that in order for students to learn, they need to be in school and they also need to be able to see the front of the classroom or read the book at their desk,” said **Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña**. “This partnership – and expanded access to vision screening – will help thousands of kids thrive, and is a critical part of my mission to support the whole needs of every child. I thank Warby Parker for their donation, and I look forward to working with them as we help ensure students can succeed both in and out of the classroom.”

“I’m thrilled that thanks to this partnership between the City and Warby Parker, 20,000 New York City students will be provided with the glasses they need,” said **Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. “Every student should have the necessary resources to succeed in the classroom, and vision impairment should not hold anyone back from having an opportunity to learn. I thank the de Blasio administration and Warby Parker for their shared vision to help young New Yorkers excel in their academic careers.”

“Nearly 20 percent of school-aged children have some type of vision impairment. Unfortunately, too many children – particularly those in low income communities – go without vision screenings and glasses because they are inaccessible and unaffordable. And when our students can’t see, they can’t learn. I am grateful to Warby Parker for this partnership so that every child is granted a vision test, and every child who needs glasses will be given a free pair,” said **Public Advocate Letitia James**.

“I’m thrilled that the City is investing in vision screening and testing services and doing it in style,” said **Comptroller Scott Stringer**. “It’s great news that Warby Parker has agreed to provide glasses to New York City students – it happens to be the brand I wear, and I’m happy to report that they’ve upped my fashion quotient while keeping everything in focus. This new program is an all-round win.”

“I grew up as a child with limited vision, so I know from personal experience how it can affect a child’s ability to do well in school. Fortunately, my parents were able to get me excellent vision care,” said **Assembly Member and Chair of the Health Committee Richard N. Gottfried**. “Warby Parker’s generosity, combined with Mayor de Blasio’s commitment to expanding vision screening through the City’s Community Schools program, will help thousands of New York City school children get a better start in life and develop to their full potential.”

“Many students need glasses to read but some are too poor to afford them,” said **Council Member Daniel Dromm, Education Committee Chairperson and former public school teacher**. “Warby Parker’s offer to provide free eyeglasses is amazing. Oftentimes students in my class would actually have to take the reading test without glasses. That’s not right. Now students in the Community Schools won’t have to worry about that. Thank you, Warby Parker!”

Founded in 2010, Warby Parker is a NYC-based lifestyle brand that offers designer eyewear at a revolutionary price while leading the way for socially conscious businesses. In partnership with the Community Schools initiative, Warby Parker will provide one free pair of glasses to all students who need them during the 2015-2016 academic year. For the following three school years, Warby Parker will provide one free pair of glasses to all new Community School students who need them. The company aims to distribute a selection of non-branded

stylish frames to 20,000 students over the next four years. For the past year, Warby Parker has been piloting a similar program at New York City schools. This new partnership with the Community Schools initiative will enable the brand to reach even more kids, with the goal of ensuring that all local students who need glasses have the resources to access them.

The City has budgeted \$10 million for the expansion of vision screening over the next four years, including \$2 million per year baselined for each of the coming years in the Adopted Budget approved this week. The expansion of free vision screening builds on the City's commitment to Community Schools, schools that are built on partnerships between families, staff and the greater community. Community Schools work to improve student outcomes by meeting the whole needs of students and of the family through academic enrichment, increased after-school activities, health and mental health services, and more. This partnership with Warby Parker will serve students in many of the city's historically struggling schools, including all 94 Renewal Schools – all of which will be Community Schools starting this coming school year.

“This generous commitment from Warby Parker is a terrific example of how public-private partnerships can help New Yorkers across the city,” said **Gabrielle Fialkoff, Senior Advisor to the Mayor and Director of the Office of Strategic Partnerships**. “Warby Parker has had great success as a homegrown New York tech company and we are thrilled that they are stepping up to support our Community Schools. By combining the innovation and flexibility of the private sector with the unmatched reach of government, this public-private partnership is a win-win for city students.”

“Through early detection of visual impairments, free school vision screenings will dramatically improve the quality of life for children and bring into focus the overall importance of community health,” said **Ernest Logan, President of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators**.

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