



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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** September 20, 2018  
**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**MAYOR DE BLASIO AND CHANCELLOR CARRANZA ANNOUNCE DISTRICT 15  
MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVERSITY PLAN AND LAUNCH \$2M SCHOOL DIVERSITY  
GRANT PROGRAM**

**NEW YORK** – Mayor de Blasio and Schools Chancellor Richard A. Carranza today announced the next steps in the City’s school diversity plan – approving a diversity plan to increase middle school diversity in Brooklyn’s District 15 after a year-long community-driven process and proposal, and launching a \$2 million school diversity grant program for other school districts and communities across the City to develop their own community-driven diversity plans.

The Mayor and Chancellor also announced that the City’s independent School Diversity Advisory Group will continue to advise the City after issuing its initial report this December.

“We believe that our schools can reflect our whole city and we are proud to support and invest in the future of New Yorkers for generations to come. This isn’t going to be one size fits all. This is a ripe moment and this community built a powerful grassroots plan. Now, we have to execute and deliver on it to show parents across the city this approach can work,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

“The research is clear – integrated schools benefit all students,” said **Schools Chancellor Richard A. Carranza**. “There’s a groundswell of support from parents, educators, and students across the City, and today, we’re taking a real step towards integration in District 15 and citywide. I’m going to be working closely with Districts 1, 3, and 15 to implement their plans, and encouraging superintendents and school leaders across the City to take on this work in their communities.”

“The District 15 middle-school integration plan is a real step forward for our students, and for inclusive democracy in our city. We can’t teach our kids that they all have equal potential, or that the future of our city depends on working together across lines of race and class, when we don’t put it into practice for our middle-school students,” said **Council Member Brad Lander**. “The current D15 admissions process presents itself as a system of choice and meritocracy, but it functions as a system for hoarding privilege. That’s why we’ve been working closely with parents, students, and educators for the past 5 years to push for change. Thank you to the District 15 Diversity Plan Working Group, to everyone who took part and helped to organize it, and to Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Carranza for approving it. Integration is not zero-sum. I

genuinely believe that this plan will be better for all students, and that a less segregated, less divided city will be better for all of us.”

“This plan was built from the ground up. It is the result of more than a year of community input from every corner of District 15. Engaging parents and students together has given us a roadmap to ensure every middle school in the district is a fully-funded, high-quality school,” said **Council Member Carlos Menchaca**. “I commend Mayor Bill de Blasio and Chancellor Carranza for listening to the people and approving this plan. However, we have to make sure that as we implement it, we continue the dialogue with the parents and stakeholders that got us here, and that we stay laser-focused on providing a more equitable distribution of resources to every school.”

### **District 15**

Last school year, as part of the citywide school diversity plan, [Equity & Excellence for All: Diversity in New York City Public Schools](#), the DOE supported District 1 and District 3 in Manhattan to develop and launch the City’s first districtwide diversity plans.

In August 2017, the District 15 community began to develop a plan that would create more diverse and meaningfully integrated middle schools, and further support school quality in Brooklyn’s District 15, which includes Boerum Hill, Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill, Fort Greene, Gowanus, Kensington, Park Slope, Sunset Park, Red Hook, and Windsor Terrace. Working with the urban planning firm WXY, the DOE convened a 16-member Working Group to help the community – including District 15 educators, parents, a Community Education Council member, advocates, and representatives of community-based organizations. The Working Group led the process of the developing the plan, which included four public workshops, several additional meetings, and community outreach. The Working Group released final recommendations in August 2018.

The approved District 15 diversity plan will become the City’s second districtwide middle-school diversity plan. It will go into effect for students entering 6<sup>th</sup> grade in fall 2019, and has two primary components (admissions changes and additional supports):

- 1) The District 15 middle school diversity plan will remove screens from all middle schools, and will prioritize 52% of 6<sup>th</sup>-grade seats for students from low-income families, English Language Learners, and students in temporary housing.

Previously, ten of District 15’s 11 middle schools used a screened admissions method, which meant they considered students’ grades, test scores, attendance, and/or other factors when making matches.

- 2) The City will invest \$500,000 to support the admissions changes, including resources to support teachers and schools.

The DOE will create a District 15 Middle School Admissions Coordinator position and Outreach Team that will call all families of 5<sup>th</sup> graders in the district with information about District 15 middle schools and their unique offerings. They will also visit and host

community meetings and information sessions throughout the year to share information about the diversity plan and the district's middle schools.

The DOE will also create a District 15 Diversity, Equity, and Integration Coordinator position and provide funding for teacher training and the arts, technology, and supports for middle schools in the district as needed.

The District 15 diversity plan has the unanimous support of the district's elementary and middle school principals. The plan will be continuously reviewed to ensure it is advancing the goals of diversity, equity, and student achievement in the district.

"In District 15, we believe that our children should learn together and that's why our parents and educators are so excited about this plan. District 15 parents have always been committed to providing great learning opportunities for all children," said **District 15 Superintendent Anita Skop**. "All of our District 15 middle schools are strong, and this is an opportunity for more of our students to attend the school that's right for them. The current process is intense and difficult for such young children, and the changes are going to make it better for students, families, and educators across the district."

"New York City public schools need to reflect the diversity of the city. We are pleased to see District 15 educators and parents working together to help ensure their middle schools provide the best opportunities for all students in the district," said **Michael Mulgrew, President of the United Federation of Teachers**.

"The Council of School Supervisors and Administrators believes that students of every race, religion, gender and socioeconomic status benefit from diverse and inclusive classrooms," said **CSA President Mark Cannizzaro**. "We believe in the potential of District 15's plan to increase middle school diversity because school leaders within the district have been consistently included in dialogue and development throughout this process, and this plan has the support of the district's elementary and middle school principals. Our school leaders face the critical task of successfully implementing any diversity plan and must always be given the necessary time and resources to educate and align their school communities and create inclusive classrooms. We look forward to our continuing collaboration with Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Carranza as other school districts further develop their own diversity plans."

"Diversity in our schools is an incredibly important issue," said **Assembly Member Robert Carroll**. "I look forward to continuing to work with the Mayor, Chancellor Carranza, other colleagues in government and parents to ensure that our schools are representative of the diversity of our population."

"Our District 15 middle schools are strong, but they have lacked in the diversity that can make them even stronger and provide a more enriching middle school experience for all of our students. With this plan, middle schoolers will have equal and exciting opportunities to attend a school that is right for them. This is not only the right thing to do, it will also make the admissions processes better for the students, their families and their school communities," said **Assembly Member Jo Anne Simon**.

“We are excited to see Mayor de Blasio and Schools Chancellor Richard A. Carranza stand in full support of the D15 Diversity Plan,” says **Chris Rice, the D15 Project Manager and a planner at WXY**. “The final plan represents a tremendous effort by the Working Group and District 15 school community, who came together to have challenging conversations and to think comprehensively about school diversity, in terms of both integration and inclusion within schools.”

“New York City and the Department of Education embraced a forward-looking approach to addressing this complex issue by allowing for data analysis, public engagement and a diverse group of community stakeholders to guide the process and the plan,” said **Adam Lubinsky, WXY Managing Principal**. “District 15 and the DOE have created a model for other school districts to take on the challenging and necessary work of school integration.”

“District 15 Parents for Middle School Equity is proud to have been part of the process that led to the elimination of a system of barriers to schools for children. We are hopeful that the new approach will be rolled out with the thought and patience needed to make the middle schools of District 15 successful models of equitable and inclusive learning communities. We thank the DOE for its hard work in listening to all parts of this diverse district, and its continued support of this ambitious project,” said **Miriam Nunberg, Parents for Middle School Equity**.

“I commend the Mayor and the Chancellor for approving this ambitious and visionary plan to integrate middle schools in District 15. This is an incredible step forward to begin to dismantle systemic racism and to create a more just education system that serves all our children. I am deeply grateful to the District 15 community for having paved the way for a thoughtful process in developing desegregation plans and sincerely hope that more districts will follow,” said **Shino Tanikawa, Co-Chair of the Education Council Consortium, CEC2**.

“We applaud Mayor Bill de Blasio and Chancellor Richard Carranza for a bold step towards the work of integration and equity in New York City. The approval of the D15 Diversity Plan and the launch of the School Diversity Grant Program, represent a true commitment to community-driven solutions, coupled with decisive leadership,” said **Matt Gonzales, Director, School Diversity Project, New York Appleseed**. “The D15 plan is smart, prioritizing equitable enrollment policy, alongside initiatives for culturally relevant education and restorative justice. The Grant program can support the many districts across New York City already interested in integration. We are grateful to Council Member Brad Lander, Council Member Carlos Menchaca, the entire District 15 community, Superintendent Anita Skop, the Community Education Council, and advocates like Principal Jill Bloomberg and Parents for Middle School Equity for their many years of work leading to this plan. Last but not least, WXY facilitated the best community-engagement process in the modern history of DOE and threaded the needle over and over again to produce a workable plan for the district.”

“When our schools reflect the diversity of our city, we will ALL face the most urgent problems facing our city and nation. When all schools are responsible for addressing these problems, our curricula, pedagogy, and disciplinary practices will be challenged and transformed. Schools

should be centers of social change and justice, and we desperately needed this to get everyone on board,” said **Lynn Shon, Working Group member and STEM teacher at M.S. 88**

“IntegrateNYC is grateful that the DOE has partnered with us because we believe student voice is essential in the process of creating policy that affects them. Providing anti-bias and culturally relevant education training for all middle school staff is an essential part of ensuring a transformative approach to integration that creates meaningful equity and inclusion within the school environment. Students will be empowered to thrive in their schools with supportive staff,” said **Julisa Perez, IntegrateNYC Executive College Director**.

“Public schools are for are for all kids and we need our schools to look like our city. That is why the District 15 Diversity plan is such an important model for integration for all of NYC,” said **Eliza Seki, IntegrateNYC Middle School Lead and 7th grader at MS 839**.

“Kids go to school every day and know what’s happening. This is an exciting start to making all schools fair,” said **Benji Weiss, IntegrateNYC Middle School Lead and 6th grader at the Brooklyn School for Collaborative Studies**.

### **\$2 Million Diversity Grant Program**

Using the work in District 15 as a model, the City will launch a \$2 million grant program for other school districts and communities across the City to develop their own community-driven diversity plans.

The \$2 million will primarily be used to support community planning processes similar to the one in District 15, including engaging community planning firms with expertise in this work, selecting and developing Working Groups, hosting community meetings and providing materials and translation, and developing final proposals.

School districts will be able to apply for the grant this fall. We expect approximately 10 districts to participate in this round of grants.

The new \$2 million grant program also draws from initial discussions of the City’s independent School Diversity Advisory Group. The Advisory Group will remain in place to support implementation and share recommendations into 2019 and beyond.

### **Research**

The research is clear that all students benefit from diverse, inclusive schools and classrooms where all students, families, and school staff are supported and welcomed.

- A 2016 report from the Century Foundation reported that “school integration – by race and socioeconomic status – is good for children.” This report also notes that there is widespread agreement that there are positive academic outcomes for all students attending racially diverse schools, including reductions in racial achievement gaps.<sup>1</sup>
- Attending integrated schools is also associated with higher rates of high school completion for nonwhite students.<sup>2</sup>

- The National Center for Education Statistics found that white students do just as well academically in schools with high proportions of black students as in schools with low proportions of black students.<sup>3</sup>
- Integrated classrooms have been shown to enhance students’ critical thinking skills and intellectual engagement as they encounter peers from diverse backgrounds.<sup>4</sup>
- In another report, the Century Foundation found that setting clear, district-wide diversity goals played an important role in successful school integration efforts.<sup>5</sup>

These next steps in the City’s diversity plan are central to the Mayor and Chancellor’s Equity and Excellence for All agenda.

Together, the Equity and Excellence for All initiatives are building a pathway to success in college and careers for all students. Our schools are starting earlier – free, full-day, high-quality education for three-year-olds and four-year-olds through 3-K for All and Pre-K for All. They are strengthening foundational skills and instruction earlier – Universal Literacy so that every student is reading on grade level by the end of 2nd grade; and Algebra for All to improve elementary- and middle-school math instruction and ensure that all 8th graders have access to algebra. They are offering students more challenging, hands-on, college and career-aligned coursework – Computer Science for All brings 21st-century computer science instruction to every school, and AP for All will give all high school students access to at least five Advanced Placement courses. Along the way, they are giving students and families additional support through College Access for All, Single Shepherd, and investment in Community Schools. Efforts to create more diverse and inclusive classrooms, including [Equity & Excellence for All: Diversity in New York City Public Schools](#) are central to this pathway.

###

1. Wells, Amy Stuart, Fox, Lauren, and Cardova-Cobo, Diana: How Racially Diverse Schools and Classrooms Can Benefit All Students. *The Century Foundation*. February 9, 2016.
2. Janet Ward Schofield, “Maximizing Benefits of Student Diversity: Lessons from School Desegregation Research,” in *Diversity Challenged: Evidence on the Impact of Affirmative Action*, ed. Gary Orfield with Michal Kurlaender (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Education Publishing Group, 2001): 99-141
3. Bohrnstedt, G., Kitmitto, S., Ogut, B., Sherman, D., and Chan, D. (2015). *School Composition and the Black–White Achievement Gap* (NCES 2015-018). U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved [date] from
4. Patricia Gurin, “Expert Report of Patricia Gurin,” submitted in *Gratz, et al. v. Bollinger, et al.*, No. 97-75231 (E.D. Mich. 1999) and *Grutter, et al. v. Bollinger, et al.*, No. 97-75928 (E.D. Mich. 1999)
5. Kahlenberg, Richard D. “School Integration in Practice: Lessons from Nine Districts.” The Century Foundation, Oct. 14, 2016. <https://tcf.org/content/report/school-integration-practice-lessons-nine-districts/>