



Joel I. Klein
Chancellor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHANCELLOR KLEIN LAUNCHES THIRD ANNUAL SURVEY OF PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND STUDENTS

Parents Will Begin Receiving Surveys This Week; Surveys Due April 24

New "Online-Only" Option and More Efficient Printing Will Save Six Tons of Paper

New "Survey Quest" Web Tool Allows Schools and Families to Easily Access Last Year's Survey Results

Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein today launched the third annual Learning Environment Survey, which asks all 1.5 million public school parents, teachers, and sixth through twelfth grade students whether their schools are setting high expectations, keeping educators and students safe, and effectively engaging and communicating with all members of their community. The Chancellor also announced the launch of "Survey Quest," a new online tool that allows parents and schools to analyze every school's survey results and compare them to the results of other schools. Results of this year's survey will be available at the beginning of the summer, enabling schools to use them as they plan for the 2009-10 academic year. For the first time this year, all students and teachers at almost 500 schools will take the survey online, saving hundreds of thousands of sheets of paper. The Department of Education (DOE) is partnering with the City's three public library systems to make it easy for parents without Internet access at home to take the survey online at the local branch of their library. Chancellor Klein was joined at I.S. 141 in Astoria, Queens, one of the schools participating in this online-only program, by United Federation of Teachers Vice President Michael Mulgrew, Council of School Supervisors and Administrators President Ernest Logan, representatives of the City's three public library systems, and Principal Miranda Pavlou.

"During the past two years, schools across the City have made improvements as a direct result of feedback from parents, teachers, and students on the Learning Environment Survey," Chancellor Klein said. "Last year, more than 800,000 New Yorkers participated in the survey; I hope that even more will take the opportunity to make their voices heard this year."

"We are strongly encouraging teachers and parents to speak up and speak out on these surveys," United Federation of Teachers Chief Operating Officer Michael Mulgrew said. "They spotlight different aspects of a school's operation beyond just standardized test scores, and they are an important tool for providing feedback on what works within the system and what areas need improving."

"The Council of School Supervisors and Administrators continues to welcome the opportunity to raise awareness about the Learning Environment Survey," Council of

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School Supervisors and Administrators President Ernest Logan said. “Our Principals and Assistant Principals have found the survey to be one important step in gaining insightful information from the entire school community, including teachers, parents and students. This is often information they can use to address issues in ways that make their schools stronger.”

“We welcome families into The New York Public Library’s 89 locations in Manhattan, The Bronx and Staten Island to complete this important survey,” New York Public Library President Paul LeClerc said. “Library branches offer more than 3,000 public computers, including many dedicated just for children, and these are always free and available to anyone with a library card.”

“Brooklyn Public Library is proud to provide a platform where students and their families can exercise their voices and build stronger learning communities,” Brooklyn Public Library Executive Director Dionne Mack-Harvin said. “Our 60 libraries across Brooklyn are each equipped with free computers and Internet access to complete the Learning Environment Survey—and we offer the largest WI-FI network in the borough for those who want to give their feedback from the convenience of their own laptops.”

“Queens Library has many resources to help parents and their children succeed academically. All Queens Library locations have free public use computers and free wireless access for those who bring their own laptops. The community is welcome to participate in the Learning Environment Survey here,” Queens Library Director Thomas W. Galante said.

Parents will begin receiving the survey in a bright green envelope this week—in their children’s backpacks, at school events, or in the mail. Students in grades six to twelve and teachers will receive their surveys at school. Parents and teachers can complete the survey online at www.nyc.gov/schools/surveys or return their confidential, completed surveys in the pre-addressed, postage-paid return envelopes provided. Parents who do not have Internet access at home can complete the survey online at the local branch of the public library after they sign up for a free library card. Students can complete surveys online or at school. Parent and student surveys are available online and on paper in nine languages: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu.

Any parent or teacher who has not received a survey by the end of March should contact his or her school or call 3-1-1 to request one.

Based on their high survey response rates last year, the Department of Education gave many schools the opportunity to forego the paper version of the teacher and student surveys this year and administer the surveys online instead. A total of 486 schools (about 30% of all schools) chose to

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participate in this “online-only” program. All students at 249 schools and all teachers at 338 schools will take the survey online. These schools will save about 206,000 pieces of paper and 118,000 envelopes. All parents, teachers, and students can choose to take the survey online, regardless of whether their school is participating in the online-only program.

The Department is saving an additional one million sheets of paper by printing parent surveys on a single 8.5-by-11 inch page instead of two 11-by-14 inch pages. These changes, combined with the online-only program, will save about six tons of paper this year.

As in previous years, survey responses will be collected by an external vendor to assure confidentiality. Parents and educators will receive a detailed report of aggregate responses that will help pinpoint ways in which their school can operate more effectively. Beginning today, parents, educators, and others can view the most recent survey results—released at the end of last year—using Survey Quest, a new online tool available on the Department’s Web site. This tool makes it easy to analyze a school’s survey results and compare them to the results of other schools. Results from this year’s survey will be available in Survey Quest as soon as they are released early this summer.

Parents, teachers, and students each take a different version of the survey. All three surveys focus on critical conditions for learning: safety, communication, engagement, and expectations. The parent survey asks parents to assess courses and other programs, how often they talk with their children’s teachers, and their satisfaction with the quality of education their children are receiving. The student survey asks sixth through twelfth graders whether adults at their schools know who they are, if their schools set high expectations, whether they feel safe at school, and many other questions. The teacher survey asks about school safety, if instructional materials are in good condition, and whether principals are supportive leaders and effective managers.

Last year, 800,000 parents, teachers, and students—one in ten New Yorkers—filled out a Learning Environment Survey, an increase of nearly 220,000 over the previous year. The results showed that schools used the feedback they received on the previous year’s survey to improve communication with parents and teachers, create more personalized instruction for students, and more effectively promote a culture of safety and respect.

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