



## Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council

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March 09, 2023

Chancellor David C. Banks  
NYC Department of Education  
Tweed Courthouse  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chancellor Banks,

### **CPAC's Request for Commitment to Fully Funded Enhanced Cafeterias**

On behalf of all of us at the Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council (CPAC), and as proud parents and guardians of New York City public school students, we want to thank you for your continued support and your efforts to guarantee that our students are safe and happy while receiving a terrific education. Over the course of your tenure as Chancellor, we have seen the impact of your work across our communities and New York City as a whole.

At the end of last year, we were delighted to see your and Mayor Adams' commitment to ensuring our students have access to healthy school meals through the expansion of the Cafeteria Enhancement Experience (CEE) to more than 80 more cafeterias for our public-school students. Now, we're asking that you expand the CEE program to include all middle and high schools in New York City.

This additional funding will ensure that *all* of our New York City public school students are receiving equitable opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom. The full expansion of this program will further promote equity across our public school system. With many of our communities still reeling from the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, our schools are safe havens – providing a comfortable and encouraging place to learn, and so much more. It is more important than ever to guarantee that our students have access to healthy school meals in a friendly environment.

Access to free school meals for all students has been directly connected to boosts in academic performance. However, the low school meal participation in many middle and high schools indicates that more must be done

to invite older students into cafeteria spaces that carry the historical burden of stigma. Community Food Advocates' (CFA) analysis found that high schools with redesigned cafeterias experienced a 35% increase in student participation in school meals. This analysis further proves that enhanced cafeterias with new features like more daily menu options, faster service, and better presentation will leave less of our students hungry.

As parents and guardians, we know firsthand that healthy school meals are critical to keeping children focused and engaged. We also know there is research to support this. That is why we urge you to make cafeteria redesign a priority and commit to expanding the CEE program to all middle and high schools in the New York City public school system and guarantee equity across our schools.

With much appreciation,  
The Chancellor's Parent Advisor Council

*Approved by the membership at its March 09, 2023 CPAC meeting.*

Cc: Emma Vadehra, NYCDOE, Chief Operating Officer  
Kevin Moran, NYCDOE Chief School Operations Officer  
Chris Tricarico, NYCDOE Senior Executive Director, Office of Food and Nutrition Services  
Kate MacKenzie, Executive Director, Mayor's Office of Food Policy