

## What is your North Star?

Ask yourself where it is you want to go...

School year 2018-19 was all about (re)connecting with our sense of purpose in our work—our *WHY*. We enter this school year secure in our stance that our reason for engaging in this work—to Advance Equity Now—remains as righteous and needed as ever before.

Without question having a sense of the mission and vision towards which you want to move is a necessary place to begin. At the start of the 2019-20 school year, the big question we have on our minds is, in what ways are we ensuring that our work has us moving towards our hopes and dreams? As intrepid travelers have done for thousands of years, we look to the stars for the signs to follow. Specifically, we are looking to *The North Star*, by Peter H. Reynolds, so that we are able to chart a course across our frenzied, jam-packed year, and come out on the other side closer to our hopes and dreams.

## Nurture an Inclusive Environment

"If only every individual could find and follow his or her own star—and be encouraged to do so—how different the world would be."

- Dr. Jane Goodall



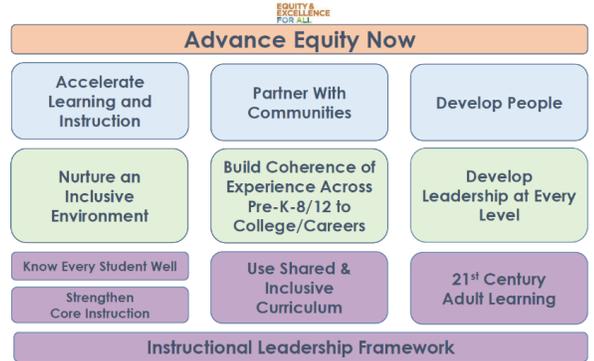
Dr. Goodall's quote in praise of *The North Star* makes our heart sing as it serves as the emotional midpoint between our *WHY* and our *HOW*. Critical to our work this year is ensuring time at the beginning of the year for those in our charge to name out their hopes and dreams. While it is good work, the sheer magnitude of journey ahead of us might cause us to (temporarily) lose sight of the destination. For that reason it was important to our core team that the two groups of adults with whom we work closest—our school leaders and our extended team at Queens North Borough Office—had opportunities in our first meetings of the year to name out what they are excited about doing this year. It is our most sincere hope

that the dreams shared by our colleagues become the stars that guide our community towards achieving its potential.

## Ensure Coherence of Experience across Pre-K – 12

# The North Star





Equity and Excellence for All is the North Star for our system, and our data shows that we are moving in the right direction. We are proud that we continue to narrow the opportunity gaps and are even more inspired to ensure these gaps continue to minimize each and every year. At the same time, we recognize that there is still much ahead of us. On the team, we are allowing ourselves to be vulnerable: our results are not flawless and we need to embrace our flaws as proof of our need to continue to refine our practices. We encourage and support you in taking this stance with your community as well. Our shared successes are a direct result of the collective leadership of all community stakeholders in our work. We can only reach our heights because of these partnerships and this team is forever grateful and forever committed to remaining on this journey together. Thank YOU!

**Develop Leadership at Every Level**



*The boy stared at the star and felt a pang in his heart, a tingling in his spine, a whisper in his ear. He could hear the star. The voice sounded so familiar.*

A life in service of others requires a mindfulness about two journeys: one's own journey as well as the collective journey of those in their charge. When those in our charge are able to both name where they want to go, as well as see the connection between their individual journey and the direction of our system, we are setting the stage for deep and meaningful partnerships. The next generation of leaders stands before us, hungry to continue their journey. While we have partnered in the creation and dissemination of the broader signs which will guide us this year, it is on all of us to ensure that all stakeholders feel as though they have the skills to chart their own path through this year.

To support this endeavor we are thrilled to introduce you to the newest member of the [@D26Team](#): our Special Instructional Liaison, Anthony Inzerillo. In his career spanning over 22 years, Mr. Inzerillo has served as a paraprofessional, teacher, assistant principal, and for the last 15 years as the Principal of the Maurice Fitzgerald School, P.S. 199 in Queens. He comes to the team eager to leverage his experience to ensure deep connections across all stakeholders in District 26. Welcome, Anthony!

Additionally, there are three new school-level leaders joining our larger team this year. Please join us in sending a collective warm welcome to District 26's newest Interim Acting Assistant Principals: Maria Lam (MS 67), Jennifer Wynne (PS 133), and Courtney Horan (PS 191). Although new to this role, these three leaders are already integral and impactful members of our community.

Collaboration is the lifeblood of our HOW, and nowhere is this more evident than with the strong partnership we have with our Community District Education Council. Elections for new CDECs are held every two years. This year we welcome in a (largely) new CDEC, helmed by newly elected CDEC President Adriana Aviles.

On behalf of the D26 community, we wish you all the best of luck as you push your leadership to the next level, and transition into these new roles.

**This Letter's End is Just the Beginning**

*The star glowed steadily, reminding him that he still had a long journey ahead. But it was his own journey, his very own wonderful journey.*

The close of this letter marks the end of prelude, but the fantastic voyage we will be taking together this year is only just beginning. The anticipation is palpable, the excitement is real: here our journey begins anew.

Welcome back to school! As we enter this school year together with the same boundless ambition that comes with every September, we can't wait to get out into the community to support all of you as we touch the hearts and minds of all students in our district. Dream big. Here's to another year of excellence in education in District 26!

Sincerely,

Danielle Giunta, Superintendent, and the District 26 Team

