

Dear iSchool Students, Parents, and Staff,

As per the requirements of the New York City Department of Education (DOE), a School Leadership Team (SLT) is responsible for developing the school's educational plan, matching budget and needs, and building a sense of community. The SLT has three required positions – the Principal (Isora Bailey), the United Federation of Teachers Chapter Representative (Tom Smolka), and the Parents Association President or Designee (Alfred Lynch). In academic year 2018-19, the SLT additionally included students Taliyah Bradford, Kezia Dickson, and Alma Reiss-Navarre; parents Sandra Iniguez, Gina Rotundo, Bill Reinisch, Susan Tenner, and myself; and teachers Vanessa Figueroa, Karen Guzman, and Andrea Mangano. This year, the SLT discussed a variety of issues of concern to the group and the larger community.

We began the year looking at the *Comprehensive Education Plan* ([CEP](#)) that we must submit to the DOE each Fall and its relationship to the *School Instructional Action Plan* (SIAP), which is submitted to the district superintendent. Both documents highlighted specific initiatives for this year, notably

- providing additional supports, such as individualized student assessments and goal-setting, for the student population with the lowest grade point averages and Regents pass rates
- improving teacher's [Danielson](#) ratings in the area of “engaging students in learning”
- increasing the number of formal and informal teacher observations.

The primary topic of discussion this year, though, was the teacher professional development (PD) initiative around the implementation of the school's Mastery Policy. While the school values academic freedom, this initiative has worked to make teacher's individual mastery policies more consistent within and across departments in an effort to help students navigate them. The SLT has functioned as a consultative body on this initiative, which seems to have been very productive, the results of which will be

presented at the last SLT meeting in June, even though this initiative will continue in Academic Year 2019-2020.

In terms of increasing the sense of community in the school, the SLT has worked with the administration to increase access by taking steps such as providing tours in the evenings and weekends rather than during weekdays and translating the *Parent Handbook* into Spanish. As the iSchool has taken steps to restore its traditional racial and socio-economic diversity through Title I, we devoted a lot of time this year to discussing how the school can further reinforce culturally-responsive pedagogy by using outside providers for PD, as we did in 2017-18 around the issue of LGBTQ awareness. Other (perennial) topics addressed this year included vaping in bathrooms, the use of metal detectors, increasing voter registration in Advisory, the use of student and faculty mentors, and helping students with the transition to college.

I would like to thank the SLT membership this year for their vision, enthusiasm, and thoughtful attention to these issues, and look forward to working with them, as well as new members, next year. Please let me know if you have any questions, as I am happy to provide additional information about any of our work.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Cowan, SLT Chair