



Dear Parent or Guardian,

As you are no doubt aware, the current schedule for school to start in the fall has students returning to class on Wednesday, September 8, 2010.

But over the past few weeks, we heard directly from many parents and school communities concerned about the impact of Labor Day and the Jewish holidays on the first week of school. They asked us to consider moving the first day of school to Monday, September 13, 2010.

Recognizing the importance of not losing an instructional school day, the parents who wrote us further proposed that our teachers and staff use that Wednesday, September 8, 2010, as a professional development day, and instead use what is known as Brooklyn-Queens day—a professional development day that falls on Thursday, June 9, 2011 as an instructional school day.

Both the Mayor and I thought this proposal made sense for all involved and, in fact, would save parents the hassle of finding child-care for a one-day, mid-week holiday in June.

But in order to move forward with this plan, we needed the agreement of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT).

Unfortunately, the UFT refused our proposal and therefore we are left with no choice but to keep the calendar unchanged.

I also want to briefly address UFT's statements in the press that we should allow different schools to start classes on different days. That idea is simply not feasible.

We cannot have a chaotic system where different schools start classes on different days, which would require different bus schedules as well as different food schedules. It would be confusing to parents, a further strain on our budget, and disruptive to the overall school calendar.

We understand and are sympathetic to the stress some families may feel because of the schedule during the first week of school, and regret that we were unable to make a change we saw as straightforward and fair to all.

But given our inability to reach an agreement with the UFT, we will proceed with starting school on Wednesday, September 8, 2010.

I wish you and your families an enjoyable, relaxing summer, and look forward to seeing everyone in the fall.

Sincerely,

Joel I. Klein