LETTER FROM DREAM’S FAMILY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

Dear Founding Families,

Welcome to the DREAM family! I am excited to embark on this journey with you and your scholar. I look forward to a year full of memories, celebrations, laughs and lots of growth for our founding 9th grade class!

As I reflect on what it takes for each one of our scholars to succeed and become the new generation of learners and leaders here in East Harlem, I come to terms with the idea that this work is not easy. Our scholars’ paths to college and the life of their dreams is full of obstacles. In East Harlem, the unsettling reality is that only 18% of young people graduate from high school and are college ready. That is why it is critical now more than ever that we work together to support our scholars at every step along the way.

Family involvement is the key factor for scholars to find academic success. I hope that you will use this guide as a menu of options for your family to become actively involved at DREAM. Whether you become a family leader with our DREAM Family Action Council, attend a family workshop, volunteer for a special event, or work with your scholar at home, you hold the key to your child and our community’s future success.

With my sincerest gratitude and respect,
Janice Northia
Family Engagement Manager
SEE WHAT’S INSIDE!

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* HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR SCHOLAR

* GET INVOLVED!

* FAMILY WORKSHOPS

* SPECIAL HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS

* COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

* FAMILY CONFERENCES

* WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS?
TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR TEEN

MAKE IT A HABIT
Talk to your teen about whatever makes them happy. Ask them about their interests – sports, music, clothing, video games, friends, school. Communication should be open and on-going.

LISTEN MORE THAN YOU TALK
Remember to W.A.I.T (Why Am I Talking). More often than not teens do most of the listening. We can learn a great deal from them if we allow them time and space to talk and express their own thoughts and feelings.

REFLECT WHAT YOU HEAR
Instead of giving your opinion or lecturing your teen, show your teen that you are trying to understand them by repeating back to them what you heard them say. Check in and make sure that you heard correctly. “It sounds like this happened, is that right?”

PROBLEM SOLVE TOGETHER
Open-ended questions and questions that encourage your teen to arrive at a solution to a problem are often very effective. Questions shouldn’t be overly probing and shouldn’t be accusatory. Instead, approach every subject with a sense of curiosity.

OFFER YOUR OPINION WITHOUT LECTURING OR JUDGING
Know that you may hear something with which you disagree. Avoid statements like, “That’s stupid.” or “You’re wrong.” Try saying, “I hear you, and this is how I see it...”

GIVE ALL OF YOUR ATTENTION
It is difficult to have a meaningful conversation while doing other things like watching TV or being on the phone. Challenge yourself to turn off your phone or ignore calls/texts when talking with your teen.
Many people think that by the time their children are in High School, they no longer need to be involved in their children's education. The truth is that with all of the rapid physical, social, and emotional changes that happen during adolescence, High School youth need their families now more than ever - even though involvement in the upper grades looks different than it does in the younger years.

**ACADEMICS**

- Hold high expectations for your teen. Let them know that you expect them to go to and graduate from college in order to live the life of their dreams.

- Let your teen know that you expect them to do their very best in school. This means that they should go to school every single day, participate in all classroom discussions, and complete all assignments.

- Meet regularly with your teen’s teachers and advisors to ensure that they have good attendance and are on track to complete all coursework and graduate from high school with the grades and credits that they need to gain admission into college.

- Let your child know that you expect that they prepare themselves for school by completing 100% of their homework every night and reaching out for help should they need it. You can help by ensuring that your teen has a set homework routine that works best for them and that they have a study space with limited distractions.

- Talk with your teen about their goals and help them understand that hard work now is connected to living the life that they want to live later.

- Encourage your teen to pursue their passions and learn about their interests by reading books, visiting museums, playing sports, or gaining career internship experience.
SOCIAL
• Get to know your teen’s friends. Make sure that they are spending time with youth who have similar values and are making healthy decisions.
• Set clear limits.
• Be fair and consistent with consequences. Make sure that both you and your teen know what the consequence for failing to meet your expectations are.
• Help your teen understand how their decisions now affect their larger life plans.

EMOTIONAL
• Spend quality time with your teen and do activities they enjoy (i.e. watch a sports game or go the movies)
• Check in with your teen on a regular basis about how they are feeling.
• Reach out to a Social Worker if your teen seems sad for long periods of time or has difficulty managing their anger.

SEXUAL
• Talk openly with your teen about safe sex.
• Ensure they know how to protect themselves and their partners.
• Reach out to a Social Worker if you’d like to learn more about how to talk to your teen about sex.

PHYSICAL
• Ensure that your teen gets at least 8 hours of sleep a night.
• Encourage your teen to eat healthy foods and drink lots of water.
• Motivate your teen to get involved on a school athletic team.

It takes a village to raise a child - and we are a part of your village. Don’t hesitate to reach out should you ever want a partner to help brainstorm how to best support your teen!
OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT

FAMILY VISITS
We begin building trusting and meaningful relationships over the summer before school even begins. The purpose of these visits is to get to know each other and brainstorm ways to work together for our scholars’ success.

FAMILY LEARNING WALKS
Throughout the year, DREAM invites families into classrooms to observe learning in action. This is an opportunity to connect with learning specialists, ask questions, and better understand what scholars are learning in school and how you can support at home.

DREAM FAMILY CAFÉS
DREAM families are invited to sit and have coffee with our High School Principal, Jared R. Francis. Families will get to hear the latest school news, share thoughts and concerns, and build relationships with our school leadership team.

FAMILY AMBASSADORS
Recruitment Ambassadors work closely with the Family Engagement Department to help ensure that our school is fully enrolled for the following school year. Ambassadors assist by distributing flyers & posters in the community, representing the school at open houses, and serving as school tour guides.
DREAM CHARTER ADVOCACY
DREAM families work to promote the rights of charter school students and families by participating in charter school advocacy events.

DREAM HIGH SCHOOL FAMILY ACTION COUNCIL (DFAC)
The DREAM High School Family Action Council (DFAC) is a group of DREAM family leaders who work to ensure that every family at DREAM has a voice in our school. DFAC supports DREAM Charter School in developing an active and involved family body and also serves as an avenue of communication between families and our principal. Throughout the year, DFAC members develop fun school activities, projects and fundraising opportunities. DFAC meetings are great places to get the latest school news, provide feedback on important school-wide decisions and take an active role in planning and carrying out school events. DFAC meets every month and is open to all DREAM High School families.

DREAM FAMILY WORKSHOPS
Family workshops are interactive opportunities for families to learn new information and skills, share best practices with others, and form stronger support networks in the school and community. Every year, DREAM offers a variety of workshops based on families’ interests and needs. Current workshop offerings include: (Please check the school monthly calendar for workshop dates.)

COLLEGE READINESS NOW!
Learn how to start planning for college now! Understand what graduation requirements are and what options are available for your scholar.
THE TALK: HOW TO TALK ABOUT PUBERTY AND SEX WITH YOUR ADOLESCENT
Have you struggled to find ways to communicate with your child about their changing body and the importance of healthy relationships and safe sex? Learn from DREAM’s years of experience working with teens around these issues, and get practical tips that you can use today.

CHARTER SCHOOL 101
Find out what makes a Charter School different than a public school. Learn about your rights as a Charter parent, and get involved in the fight to protect your child’s right to an excellent education.

CYBERBULLYING: PARENTING IN THE DIGITAL AGE
Learn best practices about how to set limits with your teen when it comes to technology, and get concrete strategies to use to prevent cyberbullying.

NUTRITION & WELLNESS WORKSHOPS
Learn how to promote healthy eating and exercise in your household and reduce the presence of diabetes and obesity in our community.

FREE LEGAL CLINIC
DREAM partners with Volunteers of Legal Service and Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom to provide on-site, one time, free legal consultations to DREAM families dealing with housing, immigration, public benefits and other legal issues throughout the year. To register to attend the free legal clinic fill out and return the legal clinic intake form with the Family Engagement Dept.
FAMILY EDUCATION CLASSES

At DREAM, we know that our combined success depends on our ability to build a community of learners, invested in continuing our search for knowledge and growth. That is why in addition to offering classes to scholars and staff, DREAM also offers classes to families, based upon families' interests and needs.

FINANCIAL LITERACY
DREAM partners with the Neighborhood Trust to offer free financial literacy courses that help families identify their credit scores and create financial plans.

THE PARENTING JOURNEY
DREAM is committed to assisting families build safer, stronger families by offering the Parenting Journey workshop series designed to help parents build the inner strength, resources, and social networks necessary for success.

DREAM FAMILY SPECIAL EVENTS

FAMILY RETREAT
DREAM families and staff are invited to participate in day of relationship and trust building offsite. Transportation and meals are provided. This is a great opportunity to build our High School community and meet and mingle with staff and other families!

BACK TO SCHOOL BBQ - 8/31
DREAM families and staff are invited to hear what scholars have learned during our Founders' Institute and chow down on great barbecue food with DREAM staff and families.

WINTER POTLUCK - 12/20
DREAM families and staff are invited to continue building a strong school community by sitting down to share a delicious meal (potluck style!) before going on winter recess.
FAMILY CONFERENCES

DREAM holds three mandatory Family Conferences a year. Conferences are important opportunities for families to connect with teachers to receive their scholar’s latest report card, discuss academic growth, and develop strategies to support learning at home and in school. Scholars will have the opportunity to present their own progress and share goals and growth areas with their families during conferences.

Families are encouraged to remain in communication with teachers throughout the year, and can request additional meetings via email or phone at any time to discuss their child’s progress.

• November 16
• February 8
• April 12

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL FAMILY CONFERENCES

1. Talk with your child before the conference about how things are going at school.
2. Share information with teachers about your child’s strengths and interests.
3. Ask Questions:
   - What will my child be expected to learn this year?
   - Are there standards in place that will help measure my child’s growth?
   - Can you show me an example of my child’s work?
   - How will my child be evaluated?
   - How will I be made aware of my child’s progress?
   - What can I do to support my child’s learning at home?
4. Create a plan with your child’s teacher with specific steps for how to collaboratively work with your child to ensure your child’s academic success.
5. Follow up with your child’s teacher after the conference to track your child’s progress and revise your work plan.
WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS?

All DREAM High School Staff can be reached at 646-902-9105.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Who to speak to at DREAM</th>
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| I have a question about school-work, tests, class field trips, homework, and anything that takes place inside of the classroom. I want to know how I can best support my child’s learning at home. | Your Child’s Teachers  
Literature  
Don-Michael Smith  
dmsmith@wearedream.org  
Living Environment  
Adrienne Lauchert  
alauchert@wearedream.org  
Global History  
Geoff Kellogg  
gkellogg@wearedream.org  
Intervention Specialist  
Victoria Draper  
vdraper@wearedream.org  
Math  
David Gerold  
dgerold@wearedream.org  
Learning Specialist  
Tasia Burroughs  
tburroughs@wearedream.org |
| I have a question about music / theater, physical education at DREAM. I want to know more about a project, special field trip, or other issue within a particular specials elective class. | Performing Arts  
Brittany Barker  
bbarker@wearedream.org  
Physical Education  
Tim Wilson  
twilson@wearedream.org |
| I have a question about modifications being made to address my child’s special learning needs or questions about my child’s services and supports. | Reading Intervention  
Marianne Kramer  
mkramer@wearedream.org |
| I have a question concerning student enrollment, the lottery, student records, school uniforms, transportation, or school lunch. I need to advise someone of my change of address/phone number or update my emergency contacts. | Operations Coordinator  
Sharae McDuffie  
smduffie@wearedream.org |
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| I have a question about the school's culture, discipline policy, behavioral expectations, suspensions or other disciplinary actions. I want to know how the school deals with bullying. | Director of School Culture  
Kaycee Brock  
kbrock@wearedream.org  
Assistant Dean of Students  
Khallid Utely  
Kutely@wearedream.org |
| I would like to discuss an important or sensitive issue that I feel is affecting my child and family. I need help to find a support or program in the community for me or my family. I have a concern about my child's feelings or behavior and need to speak to someone other than my child's teacher. | Social Worker  
Aviva M. Birnkrant  
abirnkrant@wearedream.org |
| I have a question about how I can be involved as a family member at DREAM Charter School. I want to know more about DREAM's legal clinic and/or other community resources. I need help with an issue and don't know who to go to for help. | Family Engagement Manager  
Janice Northia  
jnorthia@wearedream.org |
| I have a question concerning the school's curriculum or instructional approach, report cards, Regents, other school wide assessments. I have spoken to my child's teacher but still have a concern. | Instructional Coach  
Brandon Tayor  
btaylor@wearedream.org |
| I have a question about DREAM's overall performance and goals. I have spoken to the Academic Dean or Director of School Culture, but still have questions. | Principal  
Jared R. Francis  
jfrancis@wearedream.org |
| I have spoken to the appropriate person, but still have a concern about a DREAM policy, procedure, or staff member that I need help resolving. | Chief of Schools  
Eve Colavito  
estevan@wearedream.org |
PROCESS FOR SHARING CONCERNS AND FINDING SOLUTIONS

**STEP 1**
Request a meeting with the staff person involved at a mutually agreeable time to directly communicate your concern and resolve the situation.

**STEP 2**
If you feel that your concern has not been resolved after this meeting, request a meeting with the School Principal.

**STEP 3**
If after meeting with the School Principal, you wish to seek further assistance, you may request to meet with the Chief of Schools. Your request should be directed to the Manager of School Administration who will schedule a meeting.

We are at all times models for our scholars and school community, and ask that all parties model DREAM’s values of diversity, respect, effort, enthusiasm, mindfulness, and teamwork at all times, especially when sharing concerns and finding solutions.

Family Engagement Manager, Janice Northia is available to answer questions and assist families throughout this process. (917) 627-5375 or jnorthia@wearedream.org.

439 E 115th St, New York, NY 10029
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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 10</td>
<td>Family Orientation 8AM or 5:30PM</td>
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<td>August 16 or 22</td>
<td>Family Visits</td>
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<td>August 25</td>
<td>Building Tour</td>
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<td>August 28</td>
<td>1st day of Founders’ Institute</td>
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<td>August 31</td>
<td>Summer BBQ</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 1-4</td>
<td>School closed for Labor Day Weekend</td>
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<td>September 5</td>
<td>Semester 1 beings</td>
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<td>September 21-22</td>
<td>School closed for Rosh Hashanah</td>
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<td>October 9</td>
<td>Columbus Day - School In Session</td>
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<td>October 30- November 3</td>
<td>Semester 1 midterms</td>
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<td>November 7</td>
<td>Election Day -School In Session</td>
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<td>November 10</td>
<td>Veterans Day - School Closed</td>
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<td>November 16</td>
<td>Family Conferences 1:00 -7:00PM</td>
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<td>November 22 - November 24</td>
<td>Thanksgiving - School Closed</td>
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<td>December 21</td>
<td>Half Day (Noon Dismissal)</td>
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<td>December 22- January 2</td>
<td>School Closed for Winter Recess</td>
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<td>January 15</td>
<td>Dr. MLK Jr. Day - School Closed</td>
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<td>January 22 - 25</td>
<td>Semester 1 finals</td>
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<td>January 29</td>
<td>Semester 2 begins</td>
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<td>February 2</td>
<td>School Closed - Staff Professional Development</td>
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<td>February 8</td>
<td>Family Conferences 1:00-7:00PM</td>
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<td>February 19-23</td>
<td>School Closed - Mid-Winter Recess</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 19-23</td>
<td>Semester 2 Midterms</td>
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<td>March 30 - April 6</td>
<td>School Closed - Spring Break</td>
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<td>April 9</td>
<td>School closed - Staff Professional Development</td>
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<td>April 12</td>
<td>Family Conferences 1:00-7:00PM</td>
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<td>May 5</td>
<td>Saturday Academy</td>
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<td>May 11</td>
<td>School closed - staff professional development</td>
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<td>May 12</td>
<td>Saturday Academy</td>
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<td>May 19</td>
<td>Saturday Academy</td>
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<td>May 25-28</td>
<td>School Closed - Memorial Day</td>
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<td>June 2</td>
<td>Saturday Academy</td>
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<td>June 5-7</td>
<td>Semester 2 finals</td>
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<td>June 9</td>
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<td>June 12</td>
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<td>Algebra Regents</td>
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<td>June 22</td>
<td>Last Day of School</td>
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