



March 9 2015

Mayor Bill de Blasio  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

We commend you again for fulfilling your pledge to add Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha to the 2015-16 school calendar as holidays. This is a significant step to recognize the diversity of our city. It is critical that you also keep your pledge to designate Lunar New Year as a school holiday.

When you ran for Mayor, and again when you took office, you made a pledge to recognize Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha and Lunar New Year as school holidays. This year, Lunar New Year fell during an already scheduled winter break, but we cannot depend on the luck of the calendar. In 2016, Lunar New Year falls on Monday, February 8.

Asian-American students comprise approximately 15 percent of all public school students – more than 150,000 students – in New York City, and Lunar New Year is the most important cultural celebration on the Asian calendar. At schools in neighborhoods across the city, absentee rates have been reported to be as high as 80 percent on Lunar New Year.

Parents should not have to choose between sending their kids to school or celebrating their most important cultural holiday with family. In addition, schools should not be open when large numbers of students will be absent and a school day could result in a waste of educational time and resources.

That is why Senators Golden, Squadron and Stavisky, and Assemblymembers Kim, Silver, Moya, Braunstein and Rozic successfully passed legislation, originally carried by now-Congressmember Meng, requiring consideration of those factors. Governor Cuomo signed that bill in December, and it is now law. It may be a failure to comply with this law to keep schools open on Lunar New Year without any substantive engagement with the public or with the Panel for Educational Policy.

We once again request to engage with your administration to determine how we can both fulfill the statutorily defined number of school days, and recognize the growing diversity of our city's children and the holidays they celebrate. We would like to meet with you before the 2015-2016 calendar is finalized to discuss this matter.

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Maloney  
Congressmember

Grace Meng  
Congressmember

Nydia M. Velázquez  
Congresswoman



Eric Adams  
Brooklyn Borough President



Gale A. Brewer  
Manhattan Borough President



Daniel Squadron  
State Senator



Martin J. Golden  
State Senator



Toby Ann Stavisky  
State Senator



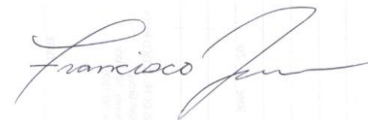
Ron Kim  
Assemblymember



Edward C. Braunstein  
Assemblymember



Michael G. DenDekker  
Assemblymember



Francisco P. Moya  
Assemblymember



Dan Quart  
Assemblymember



Nily Rozic  
Assemblymember



Sheldon Silver  
Assemblymember



Michaëlle Solages  
Assemblymember



Margaret S. Chin  
City Councilmember



Peter Koo  
City Councilmember