



February 22, 2012

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

RE: Lunar New Year

Dear Mayor Bloomberg:

We are writing to follow up on our letter, dated January 20, 2012, in which we urged you to make the Lunar New Year an official holiday or professional development day for New York City public schools.

This year, significant numbers of Asian American students missed critical time in school and fell behind on work while they celebrated the Lunar New Year with their families. In fact, approximately 80 percent of students were reported absent at P.S. 130 in Manhattan on Monday, January 23, 2012; on a typical day, the school reports an absence rate of under two percent.

As you have pointed out, days off have historically been determined by the way the school calendar affects and is affected by the customs of students and teachers. As evidenced by the significant rate of absences this Lunar New Year, the customs of our students and our teachers have changed over the years -- and so too must our calendar.

We understand and agree with concerns about losing a day on the school calendar. That is why we're urging you to take the professional development day that is currently held on what was formerly Brooklyn-Queens Day, and move it to the first day of the Lunar New Year.

This solution would ensure that the growing number of Asian American students in New York City public schools are able to celebrate this most important holiday with their families, without losing a day from the school calendar.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to further discussion and progress on this issue. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Squadron'.

Daniel Squadron
State Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Grace Meng'.

Grace Meng
Member of Assembly