

# Student-Centered Newsletter

New York State Education Department  
Office of Student Support Services  
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June 2022

## Greetings from Assistant Commissioner Kathleen DeCataldo, Esq.



Dear Colleagues,

I bring you greetings on behalf of the Office of Student Support Services.

Like many of you, I look forward to June as it is a time to celebrate the dedication and hard work of our students, parents, teachers, and leaders who completed another school year. However, we begin this June with

heavy hearts. The nation remains in mourning after the tragic mass shootings in the City of Buffalo and Uvalde, TX. We lost 10 Buffalonians, 19 school children, and two teachers. As I stated in May's newsletter, student and staff mental health is my priority. Please do all that you can take to care of yourself, during these very difficult times.

June is a celebratory month for our great State. As we conclude the 2021-2022 school, we celebrate our class of 2022 graduates. This graduating class confronted what felt like an insurmountable obstacle – a worldwide health pandemic. However, they demonstrated resiliency, perseverance, and optimism. Congratulations to the Class of 2022! I wish every graduate all the best in their future endeavors!

In the spirit of celebration, this month, we celebrate the diverse people and communities that are the fabric of New York. Home to the Stonewall Inn, a national landmark, LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers celebrate their pride throughout June with parades, art, music, dance, fashion, and fun! I wish everyone a very happy **LGBTQIA+ Pride Month!**

This month, we also recognize the Black/African American artists, songwriters, composers, and musicians – past and present – for their musical contribution that has enriched American lives for many centuries. New York is home to the internationally acclaimed Apollo Theater in Harlem. Many Black/African American performers nurtured our souls with songs from different musical genres, including the blues, jazz, hip-hop, rap, and gospel, to name a few. We honor that legacy, intellect, talent, and creativity during **African American Music Appreciation Month!**

Birthered in New York, hip-hop music would not exist without the contributions of Caribbean New Yorkers. When we celebrate New York's diversity, we acknowledge it is made richer because so many Caribbean Americans from different regions? call New York home. We commemorate the ancestors, families, friends, neighbors, and colleagues who readily share their culture and traditions with all of us during **Caribbean-American Heritage Month!**

People across the nation will celebrate **Juneteenth on June 19th!** Celebrations of Juneteenth include cookouts with family and friends, parades, festivals, and religious services. While this is a day for celebration, it is also an opportunity to reflect on the past moral failures of slavery, racism, discrimination, and oppression in our country, and recommit to correcting these wrongs through justice, equity, and inclusion of historically marginalized communities. In solidarity, we celebrate and honor Juneteenth as the date recognized as the end of slavery in this country.

Finally, take this summer to rest, relax, and rejuvenate – you deserve every minute of this summer break. Thank you for your unwavering dedication and care to our children. I look forward to seeing you all in September!

Sincerely,

*Kathleen DeCataldo*  
Assistant Commissioner



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## Resources Related to the Incidents in Buffalo & Uvalde

The Office of Student Services is committed to disseminating information and resources to schools and school districts as they become available to cope with the tragedies that occurred in the Buffalo and Uvalde. Below are some available resources immediately available.

- The New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) led a webinar [Addressing Community Grief and Trauma in the Wake of the Buffalo Tragedy](#). Additionally, OMH has compiled a [list of resources for New Yorkers impacted by the Buffalo incident](#).
- New York State is offering [immediate support to victims and all those impacted in Buffalo](#).
- [Trauma Related Resources for School Personnel](#)

The New York State Community Schools Technical Assistance Centers has a [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) Resource Portal](#) that includes tools, frameworks, and strategies to move from conversation to implementation of DEI in school communities.



New York State  
**COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**  
Technical Assistance Centers

## NYSED UPDATES

- A memo was issued regarding the [potential effects on the war in Ukraine on school communities](#). New York is home to the largest Ukrainian population, outside of Ukraine.
- [Preventing CROWN Act Incidents](#) is the second in a series of guidance briefs aimed at supporting the implementation of the New York State CROWN Act, which stands for Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair. This second brief looks at one of the most critical steps in successfully implementing the CROWN Act in Dignity Act policy and practice: preventing incidents of racial discrimination based on natural hair texture and protective hairstyles in schools through revising codes of conduct and dress codes, training and education of staff, students, and the community, and creating a positive school climate with culturally aware and responsive learning environments. You can also view the first brief, Understanding the CROWN Act released in October 2021.
- Commissioner Rosa issued a memo regarding the [flexibility in Regents examination scores to satisfy diploma requirements](#).
- Commissioner Rosa sent a [letter to educators](#) regarding the cancellation of the United States History Regents exam for June 2022 to prevent the potential to compound student trauma caused by the recent violence. [More Information](#).

## L.G.B.T.Q.I.A.+ Pride Month

*“To be fully seen by somebody, then, and be loved anyhow – this is a human offering that can border on miraculous.” – Elizabeth Gilbert*

### [A Proclamation on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, And Intersex Pride Month, 2022](#)

We celebrate LGBTQIA+ Pride Month with parades and other festivities across the State, we know there are still real challenges confronting LGBTQIA+ children, youth, and adults. Below are helpful resources to continue learning about the challenges facing the LGBTQIA+ students, and the opportunity to build allyship.

- [Teachers Are Divided on Teaching LGBTQ Topics](#)
- [Shedding Light on the Experiences of LGBTQ Students: Sobering Data and Reasons for Hope](#)
- [GLSEN’s National School Climate Survey 2019](#)
- [The Trevor Project’s 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health](#)
- [Improving School Climate for Transgender and Nonbinary Youth](#)
- [Support LGBTQ+ Students](#)



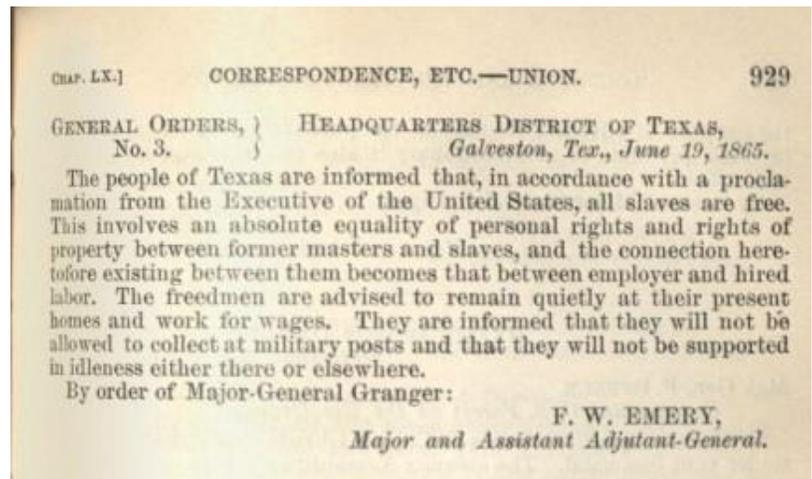
## JUNETEENTH

*“My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together.” – Desmond Tutu*

Juneteenth, the newest federal holiday, commemorates the emancipation of enslaved Africans. On June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1865, nearly 2.5 years after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, Major General Gordon Granger arrived to deliver General Order No. 3 which declared more than 250,000 enslaved African Americans in Galveston, TX were now free by executive decree. Also known as

Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, and Black Independence Day, Juneteenth is celebrated with parades, festivals, food, music, dancing, singing, and most importantly, family.

- [Juneteenth by the New York City Department of Education](#)
- [Juneteenth: A Celebration of Resilience](#)
- [What is Juneteenth? History Behind \[the\] Holiday Celebrating the End of Slavery](#) (Video)



## SUMMER MEALS PROGRAM

June is recognized as **National Hunger Awareness Month**. The summer meals program provides free nutritious breakfast and lunch to students. To learn more about summer meals, see the flyer below, or visit [Hunger Solutions New York](#).

### What is food insecurity?

Defined by the [United States Department of Agriculture](#), as a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food. It is estimated 1 in 10 New Yorkers experience food insecurity.

### SNAP Benefits

The [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP) helps low-income working people, senior citizens, the disabled, and other feed their families through issuance of electronic benefits that can be used like cash to purchase food.

### Regional Food Banks

Our State partner, the New York State Department of Health has a list of [Regional Food Banks](#) families can access during the summer.

### Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) Program

WIC provides free healthy supplemental food and services to low-income for women and children up to the age of 5. Services include nutrition counseling, breastfeeding support, health education, and referrals to other programs and services. [Learn More](#)

### Farmers Market

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets oversees FreshConnect Checks and the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). [Locate a Farmers Market in your county](#).



## SUN SAFETY

Every child needs sun protection. The lighter someone's natural skin color, the less melanin it has to absorb UV rays and protect itself. The darker a person's natural skin color, the more melanin it has. But both dark- and light-skinned kids need protection from UV rays because any tanning or burning causes skin damage.

Here are the keyways to protect kids' skin:



**Use Sunscreen.** The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) recommends that all kids — regardless of their skin tone — wear broad-spectrum **sunscreen** with an SPF of 30 or higher. If kids are in or near water, make sure the sunscreen is labeled water-resistant. Apply a generous amount and re-apply often.

**Avoid the Strongest Rays of the Day.** Try to stay in the shade when the sun is at its strongest (usually from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the northern hemisphere). If kids are in the sun during this time, apply and reapply sunscreen — even if they're just playing in the backyard. Remember that even on cloudy, cool, or overcast days, UV rays reach the earth. This "invisible sun" can cause unexpected sunburn and skin damage.

**Cover Up.** One of the best ways to protect skin is to cover up. To make sure clothes offer enough protection, put your hand inside garments to make sure you can't see it through them. Babies have thinner skin and underdeveloped melanin, so their skin burns easily. The best protection for babies under 6 months of age is shade, so they should be kept out of the sun whenever possible. If your baby must be in the sun, dress him or her in clothing that covers the body, including hats with wide brims to shadow the face. If your baby is younger than 6 months old and still has small areas of skin (like the face) exposed, you can use a tiny amount of SPF 15 sunscreen on those areas.

Even older kids need to escape the sun. For outdoor events, bring along a wide umbrella or a pop-up tent to play in. If it's not too hot outside and won't make kids even more uncomfortable, have them wear light long-sleeved shirts and/or long pants.

**Wear Sunglasses.** Sun exposure damages the eyes as well as the skin. Even 1 day in the sun can lead to a burned cornea (the outer clear membrane layer of the eye). Sun exposure over time can cause cataracts (clouding of the eye lens, which leads to blurred vision) later in life. The best way to protect eyes is to wear sunglasses that provide 100% UV protection.

Adapted from [Sun Safety, Kids Health](#).

## LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The New York State Center for School Health is holding an in-person **School Health Professionals & School Health Educators Seminar**. The Seminar will take place on July 25, 2022 from 7:30-3:30 at the Crown Plaza Albany, The Desmond Hotel. Expert presenters will speak about Human Trafficking and Drug Awareness for School Personnel. See the [NYSCSH School Health Seminar Brochure](#) for details and how to register. *For questions, please contact the NYSCSH by email at [nyscsh@monroe2boces.org](mailto:nyscsh@monroe2boces.org) or call (585) 617-2380.*



### **Leadership Training for Implementing Restorative Justice Practices K-12**

Restorative Justice is a philosophical and practical approach to education that focuses on the relationships between *all* the people who make up a school community. NYSED will be offering **free** four-day, online restorative leadership training for school building teams. The training will focus on the following in highly interactive sessions. [Learn More.](#)