

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** !

Born 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

## Resources Related to the Incident s 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.

## 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

## 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](#)

## 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.