



**PS 163**  
The Alfred E. Smith  
School

**PUBLIC SCHOOL 163**  
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Donny Lopez Principal

March 17, 2021

Dear Families of PS 163:

I am writing to inform you about a program change to our incoming Kindergarten class this fall, this will not impact any students currently enrolled in PS 163. Beginning September 2021, PS 163 will expand the Dual Language Program from one to two sections, and we will begin to phase out our kindergarten Gifted and Talented (G+T) program. The G+T Program will remain in grades 1-5 until the program will gradually sunset. This decision was made following extensive community engagement and is aligned with our school vision and commitment to advancing equity and accelerating learning for all students.

This past year has been incredibly challenging for our school community. I am so grateful for our dynamic faculty and staff as they always worked to ensure that PS 163 is a place that honors the lived experiences and identities of all of our students. In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we pivoted our instructional model and aligned resources to innovatively deliver remote and blended learning experiences for all of our students. We learned together, made mistakes along the way, and worked collaboratively to improve. I could not be more proud of the collective efforts and dedication of all of our stakeholders in service to our children.

As I shared at the February PTA Meeting, a silver lining to the changes in the program models yielded an unintended consequence; all students in blended and remote settings had the opportunity to enjoy classes with peers they may not have had the opportunity to learn with and from before. As we move forward, I believe that all our students should continue to learn in classrooms that reflect the diversity of our school community and be exposed to rigorous, culturally relevant, engaging learning experiences that affirm their identity and cultivate their genius.

I have always believed in the power of collaboration. As we continue to build on the strong foundation we have in place, I want to hear your ideas and feedback. As such, we have formed a PS 163 advisory committee comprised of important stakeholders -(parents, teachers, students, school leadership) – to help support our efforts and inform our decision-making. Any parent that is interested in becoming a part of the advisory committee should please email [dlopez17@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:dlopez17@schools.nyc.gov). I look forward to answering questions and speaking with families about this at the upcoming general PTA meeting on Thursday, March 18<sup>th</sup>.

The pandemic has been challenging, and I know that change at any time is difficult, especially now. However, throughout all that has come our way, we have come together to work through these challenges. Today, we find ourselves providing our students with a consistent school day experience. At this time, I ask that you support and join me as we embark on a new vision for our school community that provides access, opportunity, and resources for all students. I know that this work will bring its successes and challenges, but I also know that we are ready to make this a reality.

Sincerely,

Donny Lopez  
Principal