



Christopher E. Ogno
Principal

Erin O'Hanlon
Assistant Principal

Jessica McKenna
Assistant Principal

Dear Families,

My name is Ms. DuBois-Eker. I am your child's English as a New Language (ENL) teacher this year. I would like to introduce myself and tell you a little about the important work we will be doing this school year.

I am very excited to work with your child this year. I have been teaching English to children from around the world at PS 247 since 2005. I love working with diverse children, helping them to learn the English language and get to know the culture of the United States of America. I love language, and speak 4 languages myself: English, Spanish, Turkish, and French. I feel very lucky to learn about the languages, cultures, and ways of life around the world from yourself and your children, too! I am always trying to learn and grow as a person and as an educator, and am grateful for every opportunity I have to learn from our school community.

Your child and the rest of the English Language Learners (ELLs) in grades 3-5 are working hard to improve their reading, writing, and language skills. This year, we will study exciting topics like world geography & cultures, people's access to resources around the world, immigration, activism, and animal conservation. We will study stories from around the world, read books with diverse characters, and explore both fiction and non-fiction literature. We will practice and improve our language skills by working in cooperative groups to discuss what we've read, study useful academic vocabulary, and write to become fluent communicators. Your child's teacher and I work closely to make sure that we get to know your children and support them in ways that will help them to reach their goals, and participate in the grade's curriculum and standards.

I'd love to have close communication with you this year. I use the "Remind" app which translates messages between parents and the teacher in 70+ different languages. I encourage you to

1. Download the "Remind" app at rmd.me/a.
2. Open the app and create an account (or log in if you already have one).
3. Tap the + by classes joined and enter my class code @ _____.

Most of our communication will happen over Remind, but please also include your email address and best phone number on the following page, and return it to me by _____.

I very much look forward to getting to know you and your child this year. I feel so lucky to work with the linguistically and culturally diverse community at PS 247.

If you ever need anything, please feel free to contact me at PS 247 at 718-236-4205, or through the remind app. I can also be contacted by email at msdubois247@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Ms. DuBois-Eker



THE NEW YORK CITY
COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
7000 - 21st Avenue Brooklyn, New York 11204
(718) 236-4205 FAX (718) 331-8563
Today's Students Are Tomorrow's Leaders



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In addition to the Remind App (see attached letter) I would also like to ask you for your email address and phone number. Please write your email address and phone number below (please write clearly):

Child's Name & Class: _____

1.

Family member's name: _____

Family member's relationship to child: _____

Family member's Email: _____

Family member's Phone Number: _____

2.

Family member's name: _____

Family member's relationship to child: _____

Family member's Email: _____

Family member's Phone Number: _____

My email address is msdubois247@gmail.com. Please feel free to email me at any time.

Sincerely,

Ms. DuBois-Eker

ENL Teacher



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Dear Families,

I am working on expanding my classroom library. I'd like to include books that are of interest to your children, that reflect their lives, and that include the languages they speak.

I understand that the world looks different depending on who and where you are, and that through books we can better understand different points of view. It is very important to me that I have books in my classroom that serve as both "windows" and "mirrors" to my students. "Windows" are books that offer students a view into someone else's life and experiences. "Mirrors" are books that reflect their own cultures and lived experiences, and help them build their own identities. It is so important to me that my students "see" themselves as well as others in the books that they read, and that their interest is sparked. For this reason, please take some time to complete the "Reading Interest Survey" with your child on the attached pages.

In addition to this, I am looking for children's books in multiple languages. I'd love to support your children in developing language and literacy in each of languages they speak. Building fluency and literacy in more than one language is a skill that will serve them well now and for the rest of their lives. Additionally, I know that native language books give newly arrived students comfort in the classroom through access to books in the language in which they are most comfortable. Lastly, I would also like to be able to lend books to the children to take home to read with their families. Research shows that one of the most important things families can do for the academic success of their children is read with them at home. I hope to bring more native language books into the classroom and the lives of our families.

I have books in my classroom available in Chinese and Spanish, and I am searching for books available in other languages. New York City is rich in languages and culture, and there must be bookstores that carry children's books in the languages represented in our community. For this reason, I am asking for your help. If you know of stores (either online or within New York City) that carry **children's books** printed/published in the languages you speak, please share them on the next page. If you don't know, please ask your friends. ☺ Please return the slip below to Ms. DuBois as soon as you can.

Thank you for your help in making my library more dynamic and inclusive.

Sincerely,

Ms. DuBois-Eker

Child's Name: _____

Languages Spoken/Read: _____

Stores' Names and Address:

Store 1:

Store 2:

Web Address 1:

Web Address 2:

Book Title Recommendations:

Name: _____

Reading Interest Survey

Date: _____



Please answer the questions below in as much detail as you can. You may use any language you are comfortable writing in to respond. I look forward to getting to know you better as readers. Thank you!

1. In what language(s) do you read the best? _____

2. What do you like to do when you are not in school?

3. What type of books do you like to read? Tell me about it:

4. What is your favorite book, and why?

5. What is your favorite place to read?

Describe your favorite reading place.

6. Do you have a favorite series? What is it and why do you like it?

7. Do you prefer fiction (stories) or non-fiction (real information)? Why do you prefer that genre?

Name: _____

Reading Interest Survey

Date: _____

8. Is there anything else about reading you'd like to share with me? Is there anything that is difficult about reading for you? Is there anything you'd like to learn as a reader?

9. Which of the following types of books do you like to read? Check off your favorites:

<input type="checkbox"/> Mystery	<input type="checkbox"/> Magazines	<input type="checkbox"/> Science Books
<input type="checkbox"/> How-to	<input type="checkbox"/> Fantasy	<input type="checkbox"/> Series
<input type="checkbox"/> Folk Tales	<input type="checkbox"/> Animal Stories	<input type="checkbox"/> Funny Books
<input type="checkbox"/> Picture Books	<input type="checkbox"/> Poetry	<input type="checkbox"/> Historical Fiction
<input type="checkbox"/> Adventure	<input type="checkbox"/> Chapter Books	<input type="checkbox"/> Sports
<input type="checkbox"/> Biographies	<input type="checkbox"/> Comics	



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Dear Families,

I get this question a lot: "What can I do to help my child at home? What if I feel that my English is not enough?"

I know that each family is at a different point in their cultural journey and their English language development. I also imagine that you've changed the course of your family's lives for many different reasons, but probably with your child's education in mind. I know that each of you is committed to your child's education, and would like to support them in their studies to the best of your ability, all while juggling life & work. I'd like to make some recommendations of things you can do at home to support your child no matter what your English language level.

On the following pages, you'll find suggestions for things you can do at home, in the community, and at school to support your children in their education.

At home:

- Ensure that your child reads every night. Reading independently and reading with you are both equally important, at all ages.
- Discuss the books your child is reading, in any language. Ask questions like:

Fiction:

- What is the book about?
- Where does the story take place?
- Who is the main character?
- What are some traits of the main character?
- What problem does the character have?
- How does the character solve the problem?
- What is your favorite part of the book?

Non-Fiction:

- What is the book about?
- What is the main idea of the book?
- How do you know?
- What are some details that support the main idea?
- What is the most interesting thing you've learned so far?

- Read to your child at home, in any language. Research shows that children who are read to at home have higher success rates in school. I know that children's books in your native language may be hard to find, but consider narrating an English children's book in your language. Look at the pictures and tell the story in your own words, in your own language. Oral storytelling is also a cultural practice that will benefit your child's social and academic development as well.
- Check (and sign) your child's homework agenda. Each night, your child should have recorded their homework in their agenda. In this book you can see what their responsibilities are, and monitor whether or not they have completed it.
- Find a friend: Ask your children about their friends, and make an arrangement with another family for the children to play together or do homework together. Socialization skills are important for your children, and playing together will give them a good chance to practice their English. Additionally, if the children are in the same class, doing homework together may be helpful.
- If your child is stuck on a homework assignment, you have a few options to help:
 - Google Translate: In the Google Translate App, you can select the camera option, hold your phone over the text, and the app will automatically translate it for you. Try this with your child's homework if they are stuck on a question.



- If you're still not sure how to help, use a free service provided by the teacher's union: Dial a teacher: <https://dialateacher.org/>. Teachers provide free homework help, over the phone, in 10 languages.
- Another option for homework help is Youtube. There are many instructional videos, tutorials, and explanations of concepts in Math, Science, Social Studies and Language Arts.
- Play games: puzzles, board games, cards, pretend play... Games give kids an outlet for releasing energy, learning important skills like socialization, strategy, and winning (and losing) gracefully, all while building an important bond with family members.

In the community:

- Visit the public library. Children and adults can borrow books at no cost from the local public libraries, use the computers and internet, and many public libraries also offer free English language classes for adults.
 - Kings Highway Branch: 2115 Ocean Avenue
 - Highlawn Branch: 1664 W. 13th Street
 - New Utrecht Branch: 1743 86th Street

Getting a library card.

- You can begin the library card application process online: <https://disc.bklynlibrary.org/card/>
- You may also go straight to a public library branch with identification that includes your name and Brooklyn address. Children may provide a school photo id, or a current report card to show residency in Brooklyn. See this link for more information: <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/use-the-library/borrow>
- Neighborhood Associations: There are many neighborhood associations in the community and surrounding neighborhoods that offer services to families, classes, and support. Visit <https://www.brooklyncommunityfoundation.org/neighborhoods/bensonhurst> or <https://www.brooklyncommunityfoundation.org/neighborhoods/bay-ridge> to find cultural associations where you can find communities who share your language and culture, friends, and support.
- The Neighborhood Improvement Association of Bensonhurst offers free English classes for Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced learners of English. The program takes place at JHS 227, at 6500 16th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11204 on Tuesdays from 6:00-7:30 pm. Contact Thomas Zaki at NIA.PS247K@NIABKLYN.ORG, or 917-757-8684.
- Explore New York City: We are very lucky to live in a city that has so many free activities and events for kids! Getting to know New York, socializing with other children, taking in the sights, learning from places like museums, and exposure to the cultures and institutions of New York City are amazing educational experiences for kids. Check out this list of free things to do with kids in NYC:
<https://www.timeout.com/new-york-kids/things-to-do/free-things-to-do-with-kids-in-new-york>

At school:

- Attend events when you can. The school holds a variety of meetings and conferences for parents throughout the year, as well as special events and activities where your participation would be valued. American school systems look forward to the presence of parents within the school, in support of their children's education.
- Always feel free to ask questions, expect answers, and insist on translation if you need it.