



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE**

Ashwin Vasani, MD, PhD  
*Commissioner*

Dear School Administrator,

Children in historically disinvested neighborhoods are at a higher risk of childhood obesity and developing chronic diseases later in life than children in the rest of the city. This is partly due to insufficient access to physical activity and healthy eating options.

The Neighborhood Health Action Center in Brownsville, Brooklyn, is part of the NYC Health Department's plan to improve health for all New Yorkers and reduce health inequities at the neighborhood level. The Action Center invests in the area by working with schools to implement robust physical activity and healthy eating policies.

The Action Center's Healthy Schools program will run until May 2026 and will engage schools in revitalizing or establishing wellness councils and policies. We are looking to partner with your school during the academic calendar year.

The goals for wellness policies are:

- Promote Active Living — Ensure students get 60 minutes of daily physical activity through physical education, active recess, active transportation to and from school, and before- and after-school physical activity programs.
- Promote Healthy Eating — Provide only healthy fundraisers and healthy foods outside of those served at the cafeteria, do not use food as a reward, and encourage water drinking.

Since 2016, we have worked with 33 schools in Brooklyn. The schools implemented dozens of policies leading to thousands of students experiencing a healthier school environment and a healthier community. To see our complete toolkit, visit [nyc.gov/health](https://nyc.gov/health) and search for [healthy schools](#).

Together, we can improve the health of our students. If you have any questions or would like additional assistance in strengthening your school's wellness policies, email [healthyschools@health.nyc.gov](mailto:healthyschools@health.nyc.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Zahirah McNatt".

Zahirah McNatt  
Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Brooklyn Neighborhood Health  
Center for Health Equity and Community Wellness  
NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene