

The DreamYard Preparatory High School

240 E. 172nd Street, Bronx, NY 10457
T: 718.410.4242 F: 718.410.4312 dyprep.org

Anthony Santiago, Principal
Steven Cruz, Assistant Principal

Greetings District Staff, Administration, Faculty, School Staff, Scholars, Parents, Families, Community Based Partners, and the DreamYard Preparatory High School community at large:

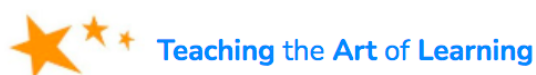
It is with great pleasure that I write this letter to you all, introducing myself as DreamYard's newest Principal. It is the highest honor to be able to serve you and this community and I could not be more excited for this opportunity.

Many of you may not know that I have been a part of the NYC Department of Education for the last 14 years. When I was 21 years old, not really knowing what I wanted to do with my life, a friend of mine told me about an opportunity at East NY Elementary School of Excellence— a school aid position was open. I was hesitant at first, but people around me said they thought I'd be good at it, so I gave it a shot. Little did I know how much that job would change the trajectory of my life and career. Working with those little ones was an experience I will never forget. It really opened my eyes to the world of education, the impact I could have on kids, and how attached I could become. They stole my heart and I quickly fell in love with the job.

After that first year at East NY Elementary, I knew I needed more. I joined the NYC Teaching Fellows and became a high school Special Education teacher at Bronxwood Preparatory Academy and, later, Bronxdale High School. In addition to teaching science as the Special Education Specialist and becoming the Special Education Coordinator, I also worked as the Head Football Coach and Athletic Director. Those 8 years in the classroom and on the field opened my eyes to the art of instruction as well as leadership, and really showed me that every day was an opportunity to make a positive impact in a young person's life. I saw teaching as a privilege, as a chance to try to bring out the best in each of my students— education was no longer just a job that I loved, it had become my passion.

In 2017, I became the Assistant Principal here at DreamYard Preparatory High School. I was lucky enough to work under a principal who was patient, brilliant, and more than willing to guide me. She allowed me to see beyond the classroom and understand education as a whole and as a system— the bigger picture. It was in this position that I began to really think about the way education can play a role in societal change and social justice on a broader scale, in addition to influencing each individual kid every day. My involvement as facilitator of the Equity Team, leader of the Building Response Team, and AP of Safety for the Taft Campus taught me a lot about the importance of partnering with the community in order to create a safe and inclusive environment for all stakeholders. Education was no longer just a passion of mine, but it had become my life's purpose.

As I embark on this new journey and begin this new role as the Principal of DreamYard Prep, I plan to continue supporting a community that develops students who are Life Ready. Our mission has always been to cultivate the core values of scholarship, artistry, and character within our students and inspire them to become successful and responsible citizens— citizens that are ready to embrace a meaningful career, are confident in their own unique abilities, and are prepared to contribute to the world in a purposeful, creative way. I also hope to foster an





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environment where staff and teachers feel comfortable and want to come to work, feel challenged while also feeling supported and appreciated, and feel a sense of pride, ownership, and collaboration in all that we do.

Lastly, as I near the end of this letter, I want to take a moment to reflect and thank those who have guided me to this point. Growing up in the Bronx afforded me many opportunities that helped me discover who I am today. I was fortunate to have people in my life who believed in me and motivated me to want more for myself, to be a better version of myself. I am a product of good teachers and great coaches, and it means everything to me to be able to give back to the community that raised me. This position is the honor of a lifetime, and I hope to do the BX proud!

I can't wait to begin this new school year and I look forward to working with all of you.

Sincerely Yours,

Anthony Santiago

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Principal, I.A.

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