

## **Joint 2014 Letter**

Dear Colleagues,

The Department of Education and the United Federation of Teachers recognize that lesson plans are a professional responsibility.

Everything about our evaluation and development system is based upon the understanding that a constructive, professional process is the best way for colleagues to collaborate to help children learn. We all know that effective teaching requires authentic and thoughtful planning. The development of lesson plans by and for the use of the teacher is a professional responsibility. A teacher's lesson plan is not the lesson itself. A lesson unfolds in the classroom as a teacher works with his or her students. Planning may be evaluated through observation of a lesson being taught, by the professional discussions that take place between teacher and supervisor and, of course, through discussion and review of the plan used to teach an observed lesson. The lesson plan cannot be evaluated in isolation but as a part of the planning cycle of the observed lesson.

Lesson plans are but one part of the process of creating and delivering quality instruction that engenders learning. How well students learn is what is most important.

Although a supervisor may suggest elements to include in a lesson, lesson plans are by and for the use of the teacher. Their format and organization, including which elements are to be included, and whether to write the plans on paper or digitally are appropriately left to the discretion of the teacher. If the teacher was ineffective the supervisor and teacher will collaborate about different strategies. Lessons should be taught in a manner consistent with the school's educational philosophy.

Lesson plans are part of the instructional planning process. As has long been the case, supervisors may continue to request and collect lesson plans; however, they may not be collected in a mechanical or routinized manner.

We know this clarification will help us work together to provide the best education for our students. We will continue to work toward our shared goal of making New York City's public schools the best in the country.

Sincerely,

Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña  
UFT President Michael Mulgrew