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Dear Students of New York City,

Thank you for your participation in the *Waste Deep* lesson plan series that aims to raise awareness of critical issues related to waste. With New York City's ambitious goal to send 'zero waste to landfills' by the year 2030, it is imperative that all people living or working in NYC work together to reach that goal.

We implore you, as young people representing the largest public education system in the United States, to help us dig in deeper. The DOE Office of Sustainability aims to connect more students and teachers with information, support, and strategies for reducing our environmental impact. We call on you to use the knowledge gained through *Waste Deep* combined with critical thinking to innovate solutions for school waste reduction, improved recycling, and stronger connection to community.

Now more than ever, there are platforms to share your innovative ideas and projects with other students, schools, and greater NYC. Some examples include the DOE Office of Sustainability's Annual Showcase event and the Department of Sanitation's Zero Waste Website that both offer opportunities for recognition and even awards. These are simply channels that exist now—more are always in the works! Your efforts can be heard, shared, and can inspire involvement from more schools and greater numbers of students.

I hope you will take on the challenge of this call to action. You can start by helping your school to kick off the new year by creating an action plan to reduce waste, recycle throughout the school daily, and to get everyone involved in your mission. You, the students, are our biggest agents of change who hold the power to make meaningful strides towards greater citywide school sustainability.

Thank you for your efforts and your interest in sustainability. I look forward to having more students like you involved!

All the best,

Meredith McDermott
Director of Sustainability, NYC Department of Education