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## COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

3 WASHINGTON SQUARE VILLAGE

NEW YORK, NY 10012-1899

[www.cb2manhattan.org](http://www.cb2manhattan.org)

P: 212-979-2272 F: 212-254-5102 E: [info@cb2manhattan.org](mailto:info@cb2manhattan.org)

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May 29, 2020

Hon. Bill de Blasio  
Mayor  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Corey Johnson  
Speaker, NYC Council  
224 West 30th St., Suite 1206  
New York, NY 10001

Richard Carranza  
Chancellor, NYC Department of Education  
Tweed Courthouse  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Mark Treyger  
Council Member,  
Chair, Committee on Education  
250 Broadway, Suite 1785  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Johnson, Chancellor Carranza, and Councilmember Treyger:

242 parents and educators attended a joint Manhattan, Community Board 1 and 2 meeting on remote learning and submitted 200 questions to our panel of six principals and senior staff to the Department of Education's Chief Academic Officer.

With this feedback, at its Full Board meeting on May 21, 2020, Community Board 2 unanimously adopted the following **Resolution In Support of Policy and Resources to Implement Remote/Hybrid Learning 3.0 and Opposition to In-School Budget Cuts**. CB 2 key recommendations are that the:

1. DOE communicate its policy for remote learning, publicly, as soon as possible;
2. DOE embrace bold strategies to *reduce the digital divide* so that *every student* has access to a remote learning device and broadband, including laptops for middle and high school students;
3. DOE incorporate a *Hybrid Plan for Fall 2020* that permits both remote and in-person learning; and,
4. Our city, state and federal leaders to *aggressively seek additional funding* for our public schools and *limit in-school budget cuts*.

### **Resolution In Support of Policy and Resources to Implement Remote/Hybrid Learning 3.0 and Opposition to In-School Budget Cuts**

**Whereas:**

1. After three months of remote learning, rolled out in only *one week*, the Department of Education (DOE) has the opportunity to improve, enhance and clarify remote learning as it prepares to return to school for Fall 2020, either fully or using a hybrid model in which schools accommodate both live and remote instruction;

2. ***Remote learning has illuminated and exacerbated the vast inequities in our educational system*** and the need for investment in public education, resulting from the (a) digital divide, (b) variability of remote learning in terms of delivery, content and depth, (c) delivery of academic support and (d) varying levels of home resources to support students;
3. While remote learning at home cannot recreate a traditional in-school environment with full time, focused attention on students from trained educators nor virtually replicate the importance of human connection; more synchronous and small group instruction combined with vibrant after school programming can provide critical connections for students who miss socializing with their friends and their teachers;
4. Based on more than 200 questions submitted prior and during our meeting, parent priorities for Fall 2020 are the:
  - a. Safe return to school for students, teachers and staff;
  - b. Addition of more live/synchronous instruction, small group instruction, and pre-recorded classes;
  - c. More uniformity of instruction within schools, within grades and across schools; and,
  - d. Additional academic support;
5. In terms of academic support, parents would like more:
  - a. Teacher check-ins and mandatory office hours, versus optional check-ins, particularly for middle and high school students who may feel intimidated asking for help;
  - b. Less reliance on delivery of content through written material and the addition of a mix of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic delivery to reach all types of learners, particularly important for students with dyslexia and ADHD;
  - c. More executive functioning support for students;
  - d. Coaching for parents on how to navigate teaching at home;
6. The DOE's plan for a safe return to school<sup>1</sup> must incorporate a hybrid model for instruction — with both remote and in-person instruction — and funding for:
  - e. Bold strategies to reduce the digital divide and move toward universal access to technology and broadband;
  - f. Teacher training and time for school planning;
  - g. Technology training and support for teachers and students;
  - h. Academic intervention to remediate students who have fallen behind, particularly students with disabilities, English language learners and students living in transitional housing;
  - i. Social emotional and trauma support for all students and educators to manage the collective trauma caused by the pandemic;
  - j. Resources to implement social distancing, cleaning and other safety measures;
7. We remain deeply concerned that cuts to in-school budgets today will lead to greater, more urgent funding needs down the road because the current needs resulting from the pandemic will go unaddressed and the adverse impact on both academic and social emotional learning will be compounded over time.

**Therefore, be it Resolved that Community Board 2:**

1. Urges the NYC Department of Education to solicit and incorporate feedback, beyond its online survey, from administrators, teachers, community boards, community education councils, after school providers, parents and students on the safe reopening of schools and delivery of education;
2. Urges the DOE to release its policy for remote learning, as soon as possible;
3. Insists that the DOE implement bold strategies to ***reduce the digital divide*** including:
  - a. Ensuring that every student has a remote learning device, including providing laptops with keyboards for middle and high school students;
  - b. Providing access to high speed broadband, particularly in low income communities and for students living in transitional housing;

- c. Requiring that plans to reduce the digital divide drive purchasing decisions and not the other way around<sup>ii</sup>; and,
- d. Partnering with private sector companies, internet providers and foundations;
- 4. Recommends that the DOE develop a plan for returning to school in Fall 2020, either fully or via a hybrid model, and provide:
  - a. Clear parameters for more live or synchronous instruction and prerecorded classes, more small group instruction, and increased feedback between students and teachers;
  - b. Teacher training, technology and time for schools to implement these policies and to increase uniformity of instruction within schools, within grades and across schools;
  - c. Guidelines for delivery of content beyond written material, executive functioning support, and academic intervention and remediation, including best practices for teaching literacy remotely;
  - d. In-school resources to address the significant social emotional and trauma needs of students and educators during this pandemic, including at least one social worker for every 100 students<sup>iii</sup>; and,
  - e. Resources to implement social distancing, cleaning and other safety measures;
- 5. Implores our elected officials to aggressively seek additional funding for our public schools and to limit in-school budget cuts, urging our:
  - a. Mayor and the Chancellor to (i) not cut Fair Student Funding, (ii) critically evaluate all contracts for necessity and value and apportion greater cuts to contracts; and (iii) review the central DOE budget to identify spending that can be reduced or eliminated<sup>iv</sup>;
  - b. Governor and State legislature to (i) protect education funding from future cuts, (ii) fully fund Foundation Aid<sup>v</sup>, (iii) fund revenue bills and (iv) provide additional funding for schools that serve students who are living in transitional housing or classified as high poverty, students with disabilities and English language learners; and,
  - c. Congressional delegates and US Senators to provide additional stimulus funding to be disbursed directly to the school districts, including support for [H.R. 6563](#), the Emergency Educational Connections Act of 2020.

**VOTE: Unanimous, with 47 Board Members in favor.**

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

Sincerely,



Carter Booth, Chair  
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Jeannine Kiely, Chair  
Schools and Education Committee  
Community Board #2, Manhattan

- c: Hon. Carolyn Maloney, Congresswoman
- Hon. Jerrold Nadler, Congressman
- Hon. Nydia Velázquez, Congresswoman
- Hon. Brian Kavanagh, NYS Senator
- Hon. Brad Hoylman, NYS Senator
- Hon. Deborah J. Glick, NYS Assembly Member
- Hon. Yuh-Line Niou, NYS Assembly Member
- Hon. Scott M. Stringer, NYC Comptroller

Hon. Jumaane Williams, NYC Public Advocate  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Margaret Chin, Council Member  
Hon. Carlina Rivera, Council Member  
Linda Chen, Chief Academic Officer, NYC DOE  
Ursulina Ramirez, Chief Operating Officer, NYC DOE  
Donalda Chumney, District 2 Superintendent, NYC DOE  
Shanna Douglas, Principal, MS 896, Lower Manhattan Community  
Jacqui Getz, Principal, MS 297 75 Morton  
Renny Fong, Principal, PS 130 Hernando De Soto  
Terri Ruyter, Principal, PS /IS 276 Battery Park City  
Kelly Shannon, Principal, PS 41 Greenwich Village  
Maggie Sienna, Principal, PS 343 Peck Slip

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<sup>i</sup> The DOE's policy for the delivery of remote learning and parameters for a safe return to school should take into account guidelines by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention's [Guidance for Childcare, Schools & Youth Sports Childcare](#) (May 19, 2020); the American Federation of Teachers' [Plan to Safely Reopen America's Schools and Communities](#) (April 28, 2020); and, New York State's [Guide to Reopening New York and Building Back](#) (May 5, 2020.)

<sup>ii</sup> See coverage of the NYC DOE's decision to purchase 300,000 iPads this spring in the [New York Post](#) and [The City](#).

<sup>iii</sup> Borough President Gale Brewer continues to [recommend one in-school social worker for every 100 students](#) and a lower ratio of social workers to students for more vulnerable student populations; and, in April, 2019, CB 2 unanimously passed a [Resolution To Implement a Mental Health Curriculum Across NYC Schools and Provide Each NYC School a Full-Time Social Worker](#), pages 23-24.

<sup>iv</sup> A May 12, 2020, [Gotham Gazette](#) op-ed outlines several cuts that would not impact in-school budgets, recommended by [34 NY Council Members](#), [Comptroller Scott Stringer](#) and [Class Size Matters](#).

<sup>v</sup> In January 2020, CB 2 unanimously passed a [Resolution in Support of Fully Funding Foundation Aid](#), page 17.