Carter Booth, *Chair*
Daniel Miller, *First Vice Chair*
Susan Kent, *Second Vice Chair*
Bob Gormley, *District Manager*

Antony Wong, *Treasurer*
Valerie De La Rosa, *Secretary*
Amy Brenna, *Assistant Secretary*

COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN
3 WASHINGTON SQUARE VILLAGE
NEW YORK, NY 10012-1899
www.cb2manhattan.org
P: 212-979-2272 F: 212-254-5102 E: info@cb2manhattan.org
Greenwich Village ❖ Little Italy ❖ SoHo ❖ NoHo ❖ Hudson Square ❖ Chinatown ❖ Gansevoort Market

March 1, 2021

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Majority Leader
28 Wells Avenue, Building #3
Yonkers, NY 10701

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

Hon. Carl E. Heastie
Assembly Speaker
1446 East Gun Hill Road
Bronx, NY 10469

Meisha Ross Porter
Chancellor, NYC Department of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Governor Cuomo, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Mayor de Blasio, Assembly Speaker Heastie, Chancellor Porter:

At its Full Board meeting February 18, 2021, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

Resolution Calling for Fully Funding Our Public Schools

Whereas:

1. Fifteen years after the Campaign for Fiscal Equity case was settled, New York City schools are still owed $1.1 billion[1];

2. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provided New York State with $1.037 billion specifically for education for the current State fiscal year[2];

[1] https://www.aqeny.org/school-district-owed/.
[2] http://www.nysed.gov/news/2020/state-education-department-announces-process-local-educational-agencies-apply-12-billion#:~:text=The%20CARES%20Act%20provides%20%2430.75,and%20respond%20to%20the%20coronavirus.&text=%E2%80%9CThis%20federal%20funding%20is%20imperative,recovering%20and%20moving%20forward%20safely.%E2%80%9D

3. Instead of increasing overall education funding with federal dollars, the Governor supplanted education funding by reducing the State contribution by $1 billion statewide, just when schools needed more resources to meet the greater needs arising from the pandemic[3];

4. In December 2020, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA Act) was signed into law, which will provide $4 billion to New York State for education purposes[4];

5. There is no clause in the CRRSA Act that prohibits supplantation, thus, making it possible for the Governor to again reduce the State share of the education funding;

6. The pandemic has greatly increased resource needs in our public schools:

    a. Reliable internet connectivity and digital devices for students and classrooms will continue to require resources;
    b. More teachers are needed for socially distanced in-person teaching and for managing multiple cohorts of students in blended and fully remote learning without unacceptable class sizes;
    c. School personnel will continue to require Personal Protective Equipment at least until "herd immunity" is achieved; and,
    d. There is a significant and immediate need for counselors and social workers in every school to address the trauma experienced by students as well as school staff;

7. Now more than ever our students need more resources to begin healing and recovering from the pandemic, let alone make up the learning losses;

8. There were several bills to increase revenues passed by the Senate but vetoed by the Governor during the last session;

9. While many New Yorkers face eviction, job loss, food insecurity and inadequate health care as a result of the pandemic, New York's 120 billionaires saw their wealth increase by $77 billion during Covid-19 to a total of $600 billion[5]; and,

10. A coalition of organizations has introduced a comprehensive set of revenue bills, which, if enacted, will raise enough revenue to fill the State's fiscal gap.

Therefore be it resolved that Community Board 2 urges the Governor and State Legislature to:

1. Not supplant State education funds with federal stimulus money;

2. Fully fund Foundation Aid with State funding; and,

3. Pass revenue-increasing bills that will make New York State's tax code more progressive and equitable.

VOTE: Unanimous, with 44 Board Members in favor.

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[3] https://www.cityandstateny.com/articles/policy/education/new-york-state-budget-deal-may-cause-nyc-other-districts-tighten-their

[4] http://www.nysed.gov/memo/coronavirus/federal-coronavirus-response-and-relief-supplemental-appropriations-act-2021-crrsa

[5] https://americansfortaxfairness.org/wp-content/uploads/NEW-YORK-ATF-HCAN-CANY-Billionaires-ReportRelease-FINAL-7-1-20.pdf

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

CB/EM

c: Hon. Carolyn Maloney, Congresswoman
Hon. Jerrold Nadler, Congressman
Hon. Nydia Velázquez, Congresswoman
Hon. Brad Hoylman, NYS Senator
Hon. Brian Kavanagh, NYS Senator
Hon. Deborah J. Glick, NYS Assembly Member
Hon. Yuh-Line Niou, NYS Assembly Member
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, NYC Comptroller
Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker, NY City Council
Hon. Jumaane Williams, NYC Public Advocate
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Margaret Chin, Council Member
Hon. Carlina Rivera, Council Member
Hon. Mark Treyger, NY City Council, Chair, Committee on Education
Yolanda Smith and Sarita Subraman, NYC Independent Budget Office, Education
Lindsey Oates, Chief Financial Officer, NYC DOE
Sayde L. Campoamor, Director of Community Affairs, NYC DOE
Marisol Rosales, Executive Superintendent, Manhattan, NYC DOE
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Renny Fong, Principal, PS 130 Hernando De Soto
Jacqui Getz, Principal, MS 297 75 Morton
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Dear Governor Cuomo, Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Mayor de Blasio, Assembly Speaker Heastie, Chancellor Porter:

At its Full Board meeting February 18, 2021, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

Resolution to Reopen Pre-K-12 Schools

Whereas:

1. The NYC Department of Education's turbulent and abrupt reopenings and closings of NYC schools have provided no consistency for principals, teachers, families and students throughout the 2020-21 school year:

    a. In the fall, the reopening of public schools was twice delayed to late September and early October;
    b. On Wednesday, November 18, the DOE announced that public schools would return to fully remote learning, effective Thursday, November 19, 2020 when the seven-day average test positivity rate reached 3%;
    c. Ten days later, on November 30, the mayor announced that elementary and District 75 schools would reopen on December 7, 2020, even as the citywide positivity rate rose above 5%. Meanwhile, the city gave families no clarity about when middle and high schools would reopen;

d. On Monday, February 8, 2021, the mayor announced that middle schools would reopen on Thursday, February 25, 2021, more than three months after they closed. As part of the reopening plan, the DOE will increase staffing for weekly testing at school sites and in the "Situation Room" charged with tracking and responding to potential cases. Meanwhile, the DOE gave families no clarity about when high schools would reopen; and,
e. As part of the testing and tracing program, whenever a NYC DOE building has more than two confirmed Covid cases in two different classrooms, every class and school located in the building closes for up to ten days;

2. The DOE has not given families the opportunity to opt in to in-person learning since November 2020 despite promises last summer that there would be multiple "open enrollment" periods throughout the academic year to switch from remote-only learning to in-person learning;

3. All NYC Teachers are eligible for vaccination under the NYS 1b classification and vaccinations have been underway for weeks;

4. On February 11, 2021, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention issued updated guidelines for operating schools during Covid-19[1];

5. In response, the American Federation of Teachers issued a statement highlighting the CDC's "rigorous road map, based on science" that its members can use to fight for a safe reopening" and called on Congress to "make this guidance real" and to secure needed federal funding[2]; and,

6. Attending school in-person is optimal for the social-emotional and academic development for many (but not all) students.

Therefore be it resolved that Community Board 2 implores the Mayor and the Department of Education to:

1. Ensure that NYC Public Schools receive enough city, state and federal funding to comply with CDC Guidelines for operating schools during COVID-19;

2. Streamline and centralize the online appointment process so that educators who teach children in grades PK to 12 can receive vaccinations as expeditiously as possible;

3. Provide clarity for students and families about parameters for reopening high schools;

4. Reinstate "open enrollment" periods when families may opt in to in-person learning; and,

5. Develop a plan for more fully reopening public schools in Fall 2021 that must include superintendents, principals, teachers, parents and students and meaningful and measurable outreach to marginalized community members.

VOTE: Unanimous, with 44 Board Members in favor.

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

Sincerely,

[1] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html
[2] https://www.aft.org/press-release/afts-weingarten-cdcs-schools-reopening-guidelines

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