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COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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October 4, 2021

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

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

Josh Wallack
Deputy Chancellor of Early Childhood
and Enrollment
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Sarah Kleinhandler
Chief Enrollment Officer
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Samuel Daunt
Senior Director High School Admissions
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio, Chancellor Porter, Deputy Chancellor Wallack, and Chief Enrollment Officer Kleinhandler and Senior Director Daunt:

At its Full Board meeting September 23, 2021, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

Resolution In Support of Providing a Remote Option for the 2021-2022 Academic Year

1. **WHEREAS,** over 60% of public school families in New York City elected to keep their children in a remote learning environment throughout the entirety of the 2020-2021 school year[1];
2. **WHEREAS**, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) has repeatedly declined to continue the remote learning option for the 2021-2022 academic year[2];
3. **WHEREAS,** the DOE eliminated this remote option, without adequately consulting administrators, educators, school staff, parents, and students;

[1] https://ny.chalkbeat.org/2021/4/12/22379752/de-blasio-nyc-schools-in-person-instruction

[2] https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/news/announcements/contentdetails/2021/05/24/a-recovery-for-all-of-us-mayor-de-blasio-and-schools-chancellor-porter-announce-historic-return-to-school-for-all-new-york-city-students-in-september

4. **WHEREAS**, while certain studies[3] show that transmission within school settings is similar to levels of community transmission when prevention strategies are in place,[4] significant uncertainty remains about the implications of COVID variants on in-school transmission, especially given recently (and exponentially) rising rates of infection among younger children[5];
5. **WHEREAS**, at the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, NYC schools distributed its prevention measures[6] meant to reduce the risk of transmission, but has struggled to institute, implement or enforce substantial precautions, including adequate testing, adequate ventilation[7], establishing strict cohorts of students that don't mix, providing high-quality face masks, staggered start times to reduce the volume of students in hallways, closure of schools and classrooms in response to 2-4 positive in-school cases, or a remote option to reduce the number of students in buildings[8];
6. **WHEREAS**, many NYC public elementary and middle school children under 12 years of age are attending schools that are at or beyond capacity, and will not be able to accommodate the CDC recommendation of 3 feet of social distancing;
7. **WHEREAS,** anecdotal evidence through communication with parents and educators suggests the number of parents submitting testing consent form is alarmingly low;
8. **WHEREAS**, the DOE testing schedule was drastically reduced from the prior school year, from random weekly testing of 20% of the student population to biweekly of 10% of the 10% of unvaccinated students that have registered for in-school testing[9];
9. **WHEREAS**, there are students, families and staff with pre-existing health conditions that continue to be more vulnerable to serious complications due to COVID-19 and the DOE already has a program to provide remote learning to those students;
10. **WHEREAS,** the drop-off processes at schools are overcrowded; unsafe both in terms of lack of social distancing, low mask wearing, and exposure to vehicular traffic; and the constant failure of the health screening portal contributed to significant delays getting into school buildings;
11. **WHEREAS,** the DOE had repeatedly broken the trust of public school families and staff throughout the pandemic and did not adequately educate or care for students with disabilities, multilingual learners, students in temporary housing, LGBTQIA+ students, students of color, low income students and undocumented families even before Covid 19, thus exacerbating these families experiences of school closure; and
12. **WHEREAS**, the DOE has consistently expressed their desire to provide individualized, culturally responsive, trauma informed, high quality education in a safe environment to every New York City public school student; and
13. **WHEREAS**, the DOE had both the authority and the imperative to design and implement a return-to-school plan that provided such an education;

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[3] Ismail SA, Saliba V, Lopez Bernal J, et al. SARS-CoV-2 infection and transmission in educational settings: a prospective, cross-sectional analysis of infection clusters and outbreaks in England.

[4] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/transmission_k_12_schools.html

[5] https://www.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/children-and-covid-19-state- level-data-report/

[6] https://www.schools.nyc.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/doe-homecoming-health-and- safety-guide

[7] https://gothamist.com/news/nyc-approves-4000-classrooms-unreliable-ventilation-person-schooling

[8] https://gothamist.com/news/coronavirus-statistics-back-school-edition-tracking-outbreaks-nyc-education

[9] https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/education/ny-doe-covid19-quarantine-policies-20210826-d3fjf2xo5jc6jm35pz63fx4a6y-story.html

14. **WHEREAS,** the DOE has wholly failed to do so; NOW, THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, that Community Board 2, Manhattan implores the DOE to provide families with a synchronous, high quality virtual learning and create a centralized option for families and staff throughout the 2021-2022 school year complete with student, guardian and educator input to ensure families and staff have the option of staying home as we continue to battle this deadly disease, and therefore be it further

RESOLVED, that Community Board 2, Manhattan demands any virtual option, synchronous/asynchronous, must be developed in collaboration with families and school staff to ensure remotely learning students' and families' needs are addressed; All virtual learning options should be reviewed and approved by the SLT of each school, and therefore be it further,

RESOLVED, that Community Board 2, Manhattan demands that the DOE allow students who choose 100% Virtual Learning to have pre-established opportunities to return to in-person learning, should the DOE prove to hesitant families its ability to keep students safe.

VOTE: Unanimous, with 42 Board Members in favor.

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

Sincerely,

Jeannine Kiely, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan

Patricia Laraia, Chair
Schools and Education Committee
Community Board #2, Manhattan

JK/EM

c: Hon. Carolyn Maloney, Congresswoman
Hon. Jerrold Nadler, Congressman
Hon. Brad Hoylman, NYS Senator
Hon. John C. Liu, NYS Senator
Hon. Robert Jackson, 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. Jumaane Williams, NYC Public Advocate
Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker, NYC Council
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Margaret Chin, Council Member
Hon. Carlina Rivera, Council Member
Hon. Mark Treyger, Council Member
Hon. Helen Rosenthal, Council Member
Hon. Daniel Dromm, Council Member
Erik Bottcher, Chief of Staff – City Council Speaker

Adrienne Austin, Deputy Chancellor of Community Empowerment, Partnerships, and Communications
Gabrielle Ramos-Solomon, Deputy Chief Enrollment Officer
Tim Lisante, Executive Superintendent, Access Schools
Richard Cintron, Superintendent New Visions High Schools
Sayde L. Campoamor, Director of Community Affairs, NYC DOE
Marisol Rosales, Executive Superintendent, Manhattan, NYC DOE
Kelly McGuire, District 2 Superintendent, NYC DOE
Vivian Orlean, Superintendent Manhattan High Schools
Hillary Casado, Principal, PS 3
Renny Fong, Principal, PS 130 Hernando
Sharon Levanoni, School Counselor
Wendy Lau, Social Worker