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## COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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January 24, 2022

Hon. Eric Adams  
Mayor  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

David C. Banks  
Chancellor, NYC Department of Education  
52 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007

David. A. Chokshi  
Commissioner  
NYC Department of Health  
42-09 28th Street  
Long Island City NY, 11101

Dear Mayor Adams, Chancellor Banks and Commissioner Chokshi:

At its Full Board meeting January 20, 2022, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

### **Resolution Supporting Safe Schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

1. **WHEREAS**, the number of COVID cases in NYC is the highest it has been since the beginning of the pandemic. Early data suggests that the Omicron COVID variant is much more infectious than other COVID variants and may evade vaccine and antibody protections, contributing to the current surge in known school cases;<sup>1</sup>
2. **WHEREAS**, on Jan. 3, 2022, the Department of Education (DOE) put out additional health and safety measures<sup>2</sup> to ensure students and staff are safe so that schools continue to remain open. These updates were made in partnership with City and State public health officials based on federal and scientific guidance;
3. **WHEREAS**, prior to this announcement, schools were **barely testing 10%**<sup>3</sup> of students on a weekly basis, and in many schools it was the same handful of students every week;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/article/omicron-coronavirus-variant.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/family-letters/family-letter-january-3-2022>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/10/19/nyregion/nyc-schools-COVID-testing-data.html>

4. **WHEREAS**, the new “safety” plan to send home rapid tests (which evidence shows<sup>4</sup> are less effective at detecting Omicron), and to limit isolation time, is insufficient to protect our school communities;
5. **WHEREAS**, there’s no way to assign or verify a rapid test to any individual, which creates a loophole and overburdens school staff in determining whether a claim of testing negative is actually accurate, ensuring that some infected children will return to school after exposure and continue spreading COVID to their classmates throughout the day, especially during lunch and snack;
6. **WHEREAS**, the situation room summary and the COVID case map haven’t been accurate or updated since the beginning of December and what data has been shared since the winter recess doesn’t agree with the data reported by the state<sup>5</sup>;
7. **WHEREAS**, statewide the majority of students remain unvaccinated and as of Jan. 10, 2022, only [32.2%](#) of children 5 – 11 are vaccinated in NYS<sup>6</sup>. Pre-K and 3-K students, who will still be excluded from in school COVID testing, are ineligible for the vaccine;
8. **WHEREAS**, there have been reports of teachers receiving false negatives on at-home rapid tests only to test positive on PCR tests, calling into question the effectiveness of the at home rapid tests;
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**, as of Jan. 3, 2022, each DOE staff member will receive just one KN95 mask per week by request through the month of January<sup>7</sup>;
11. **WHEREAS**, school buildings throughout the city are in dire need of upgraded classroom and cafeteria ventilation systems;
12. **WHEREAS**, many NYC public elementary and middle school children under 12 years of age are attending schools that are at or beyond capacity or have class sizes that are too large, and will not be able to accommodate the CDC recommendation of 3 feet of social distancing;
13. **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;
14. **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;

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-COVID-19-update-december-28-2021>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/health-and-wellness/COVID-information/daily-COVID-case-map>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-vaxforkids-campaign-increase-vaccination-rates-among-children-five>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.uft.org/your-rights/safety-health/environmental-health-and-safety/disease-information/coronavirus-hub/school-year-2021-22-faq/safety-schools>

15. **WHEREAS**, the DOE had both the authority and the imperative to design and implement a return-to-school plan, including a remote plan, that will provide such an education so; **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**

**RESOLVED**, that the Department of Education and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene plan to keep New York City Public School students, educators and staff as safe as possible it must provide:

1. Data transparency, accuracy and regular updates to principals, administrators and families;
2. A robust public health infrastructure for testing;
3. Regular access to both rapid and PCR tests for all students, staff and families regardless of vaccination status;
4. Improved ventilation to decades old school buildings;
5. Voluntary Opt-out consent policy for testing instead of opt-in;
6. A remote option for students who test positive, as well as, those uncomfortable returning to school buildings during this surge;
7. Mandatory home quarantining for those with close contact exposure;
8. Short-term remote learning for schools with multiple positive cases;
9. Automatic distribution of KN95 or N95 masks DAILY to all staff; and available to students upon request;
10. Training for school nurses to vaccinate or provide weekly on-site vaccination opportunities;
11. The requirement of a negative PCR test for students who have tested positive, no sooner than day-9 of their mandated 10-day quarantine, in order to return to school buildings;
12. A firm 10-day minimum quarantine policy for all students, teachers and staff with known close-contact exposure;
13. Count students in quarantine as “present” for attendance purposes, provided work is completed; and therefore be it further;
14. Home test-kits with clear instructions, including visual, in the top three to five languages spoken in our schools so they are easily understood;

**RESOLVED**, the DOE incorporate a hybrid model for instruction, with both remote and in-person instruction, and allocate funding for:

1. Bold strategies to reduce the digital divide and move toward universal access to technology and broadband;
2. Teacher training and time for school planning;
3. Technology training and support for teachers and students;
4. Academic intervention to remediate students who require support, particularly students with disabilities, English language learners and students living in transitional housing;
5. Social emotional and trauma support for all students and educators to manage the collective trauma caused by the pandemic; and
6. Resources to implement social distancing, cleaning and other safety measures.

**VOTE: Unanimous, with 45 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. 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. Erik Bottcher, Council Member
- Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
- Hon. Christopher Marte, Council Member
- Hon. Carlina Rivera, Council Member
- Hon. Mark Treyger, Council Member
- Hon. Helen Rosenthal, Council Member
- Dr. Cristina Melendes, Director of F.A.C.E. NYC DOE
- Tejumade Ajaiyeoba, Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene
- Kenita Lloyd, NYCDOE Deputy Chancellor of F.A.C.E. and External Affairs
- Dr. Danika Rux, (Acting NYCDOE Deputy Chancellor D1-6
- Carolyn V. Quintana, NYCDOE Deputy Chancellor of Teaching and Learning Opportunities
- Marisol Rosales, NYCDOE Executive Superintendent, Manhattan
- Kelly McGuire, NYCDOE District 2 Superintendent
- Vivian Orlen, NYCDOE Superintendent Hight Schools
- Dr. Usham Neill, Community Education Council District 2
- Renny Fong, Principal PS130