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Community Education Council District 20 Resolution #6

Resolution calling upon Department of Education, Mayor DeBlasio and Gov. Cuomo to delay the September opening of schools.

Sponsor: Alan Aja
Co-Sponsor: Rob Aguilar

WHEREAS Gov. Cuomo has announced the opening of New York State public schools this fall if they meet consistent [data-driven](#) thresholds, and Mayor De Blasio and DOE Chancellor Carranza have suggested the city's [readiness](#) for a safe school re-opening on September 10, 2020.

WHEREAS the UFT and the CSA, the teachers and principals union respectively, have raised doubts that the schools are safe for reopening at this time, the latter issuing "dire warnings" by their memberships due to insufficient information [regarding safety and instructional](#) protocols.

WHEREAS environments of preparedness during a pandemic are situated and heightened by larger structural inequalities that affect public schools, including persistent budget cuts (and [inadequate aid](#) during a crisis) at both the federal and state levels.

WHEREAS this austerity has systematically kept many of our DOE learning facilities infrastructurally outdated over the years, especially considering when proper [ventilation](#) has been scientifically identified as key in preventing the spread of Covid-19.

WHEREAS however Covid-19 infection rates remain low and below re-opening thresholds in the city overall, yet disaggregated there are [differential infection rates](#) (and recent spikes) within city neighborhoods that are predominantly immigrant, Black and brown (and essential worker), including in our own District 20 neighborhood of [Sunset Park](#) (currently at 6.7%) where several schools reside.

WHEREAS testing results in NYC have experienced significant delays, making the importance of testing moot, and there is no systemic, universal plan in place to [immediately test](#) school staff and children (at the same time schools are expected to produce these tests when they don't have the resources).

WHEREAS there is [no clear busing plan](#) currently in place to transport the anticipated 150,000 students who require transportation to school on their IEPs (including 26,000 from D75) with guidance on capacity, social distancing, cleaning protocols and proper training and PPE for bus drivers and attendants alike.

WHEREAS our city's essential workers who relied on REC centers for [childcare](#) and food security will be forced to vie for only 100,000 available childcare lottery seats, resulting in parents forced to make costly alternative arrangements or leave children home alone should they be required to work outside the home.

WHEREAS parents of students with disabilities in District 20 and throughout the city do not yet have proper supports in place due to in-person evaluations and impartial hearings mandatory to the IEP process suspended during COVID; and that proposed blended learning models for D75 would result in mass non-compliance for students with IEPs (nor should parents have to shoulder that burden).

WHEREAS we recognize the importance of schooling for social interaction, cognitive development and desire a “just” re-opening, but have not fully considered how a “blended” model where students attend up to twice a week also poses a [health and safety risk](#) to students and staff alike, as well as disruptive to student development and family work life.

Be it resolved that CEC District 20, in concert with the UFT, CSA, DC37, [elected officials](#), and a growing chorus of community parent groups and advocates who have identified “[too many deal-breakers](#)” for a safe re-opening.

1. [Delay the opening](#) of schools indefinitely until DOE workers and their unions demonstrate confidence in a safe and just re-opening. This includes leaving RECs open so that families who need childcare will have it available while the DOE develops a safer re-opening plan.
2. Demand that opening decisions are based not on city-wide averages for infection rates especially when individual neighborhoods demonstrate higher rates.
3. Demand the resourcing for more explicit and transparent guidance and protocols from the DOE for tracking COVID cases/deaths, for communicating cases/deaths to the community, and for testing and contact tracing, with more immediate transparent communication to parents from our own District 20 superintendent’s office. This would include a publicly published report from each school building detailing health and safety indicators that demonstrate the school is ready to open.
4. Per passed CEC resolution #1 on remote-learning (July 1st, 2020), ensure that the DOE concentrate their efforts in the funding, infrastructure and training to meet children’s needs remotely, especially considering a large number of parents have chosen the remote-learning option, and given the expected reality of immediate school closures in the wake of an outbreak.