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COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 20 RESOLUTION 1

Resolution calling upon Governor Cuomo, Mayor de Blasio, Chancellor Carranza, Executive Superintendent Freeman, and Superintendent Constantino to open schools in a safe manner for the fall 2020-2021 school year, and to implement appropriate policies to address the serious inadequacies that have come to light from the remote learning that has occurred since March 2020. Specifically, CEC 20 requests that you 1) work with the UFT to set expectations for teaching environments that prioritize children’s educational needs and provides consistent live instruction for all students through in-person and/or remote instruction, 2) ensure that teachers use coherent, engaging, and culturally responsive and sustaining curriculum specific for each grade level, and 3) address the specific needs of students with disabilities and those that are Multilingual learners (MLLs) by providing them with additional resources, support and curriculum tailored to their needs.

WHEREAS, District 20 is home to approximately 40,000 K-8 students. 16.2% have IEP’s, and 23.8% are English language learners.

WHEREAS, on June 10, 2020 the District 20 CEC held a town hall, which had approximately 200 attendees and where parents expressed their thoughts and concerns with respect to remote learning and what school would look like for the 2020-2021 academic year.

WHEREAS, parents recognize the complexity of implementing remote learning in a large district with a diverse student community, and that decisions about the next school year will depend on guidance and orders from officials and agencies in and outside of the DOE.

WHEREAS, the DOE accepted that the decision to provide live instruction this spring was at the discretion of individual teachers. Parents raised concerns that live instruction has been inconsistent across classrooms, grades and schools, that this inconsistency is unfair to students, and that many students, including younger students, MLL students and students with disabilities, need more live instruction to learn effectively.

WHEREAS, based on a district level survey dated April 24, 2020, only approximately 8% of D20 K-8 students were exposed to some type of interactive live instruction.¹

WHEREAS, many parents would like their children to return to in-person instruction in the fall, parents are concerned about how this will work with regard to health and safety given that many District 20 schools are overcrowded to begin with. A number of parents felt that planning needs to start immediately for the fall with the involvement of parents, and that special thought needs to be given to K-3 students as these are the years when they learn the basic building blocks of literacy and numeracy.

WHEREAS, a number of parents have stated that no real instruction is happening for their children during remote learning, that teachers are merely posting assignments and curating videos for children to watch rather than actively engaging in teaching, and that-teacher feedback, which is key to the learning process, is either not timely, not being provided consistently, or not provided at all-

WHEREAS, a number of parents raised concerns that no new material is being taught during remote learning, which will lead to a larger “slide” at all levels than is typically seen after the summers during normal years.

WHEREAS, a number of parents raised concerns about the services provided to their children, including those that typically require in-person activity (e.g., OT/PT). They also noted that remote learning in general was hard for many students with disabilities.

WHEREAS, some parents raised fears about retribution for expressing their concerns.

WHEREAS, parents have been the primary teachers of their children during remote learning but the schools have provided limited resources and guidance to parents on how to implement the curriculum and help their children learn.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED AND DECREED that the New York City District 20 Community Education Council calls on Governor Cuomo, Mayor DeBlasio, Chancellor Carranza, and the District 20 Leadership Team to:

1. Renegotiate the agreement with the UFT to put our children's education first and ensure that all students (if in school learning has to be suspended or limited) have access to daily live instruction during the next school year through remote learning and/or in-person education that resembles as closely as possible traditional learning.
2. Ensure that remote learning is supported by rigorous, coherent, and culturally responsive and sustaining curriculum and let experts select and design remote learning curriculum so that teachers, many of whom have little expertise in remote learning, can focus their time and attention on providing interactive instruction that helps all students achieve grade level standards, especially Multilingual learners and students with disabilities.
3. Demonstrate more urgency with regards to meeting the needs of students with disabilities by conducting evaluations in an expedited fashion and providing all of the services mandated in their IEPs.
4. Train teachers to better partner with parents on remote learning, including more timely resources and guidance materials designed specifically for parents about the curriculum and instructional methods they will be expected to use with their children outside of the school building.
5. Raise expectations and hold teachers accountable for students and parents to receive timely and meaningful feedback on their children's school work.
6. If all students cannot attend school simultaneously, coordinate schedules across schools so that parents who have students in multiple buildings have their children home on the same days.
7. In the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, assess the students and formulate an individual learning plan to address any deficiencies as a result of slide that may have occurred due to remote learning as well as the summer.
8. Hear the voices and acknowledge the concerns of our parents and address the real or perceived culture of retribution that inhibits some parents in our community from effectively advocating for their children. Clearly state that parents have a right to petition for legally mandated services, appeal the denial of said services and file suit in any appropriate venue without fear of any type of retribution against themselves or their children.