

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

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Greenwich Village ✦ Little Italy ✦ SoHo ✦ NoHo ✦ Hudson Square ✦ Chinatown ✦ Gansevoort Market

May 7, 2020

The Honorable Bill De Blasio
NYC Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Richard A. Carranza, Chancellor
NYC Department of Education
Tweed Courthouse
52 Chamber Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor De Blasio and Chancellor Carranza:

At its Full Board meeting April 30, 2020, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

In Support of a Binary Grading System with Narratives for the 2019-2020 Academic Year

Whereas:

1. The Department of Education (DOE) abruptly announced the closure of all public schools on Sunday, March 15, 2020 in a public health effort to mitigate the spread of coronavirus, COVID-19;
2. ***With the rapid roll out of remote learning, the DOE gave schools one week to create remote learning plans***, which required schools to assess individual student's technology requirements, train teachers on remote learning technology, repurpose lesson plans for remote learning, develop alternative plans for students without digital devices or internet connectivity;
3. ***Remote learning has placed a spotlight on the uneven access of our students to technology and internet:***
 - a. The DOE estimated that 300,000 (approximately one in four students) students did not have adequate access to technology in their homes to facilitate online remote learning and many students, even those with electronic devices, do not have consistent or reliable internet access;
 - b. As of April 7, 2020, schools have distributed approximately 175,000 electronic devices to students from school inventories and the DOE has distributed 40,000 iPads with priority going to students in temporary housing, followed by high school students, focusing on multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and students in public housing and in foster care;
 - c. iPads will be distributed by the DOE on a rolling basis with new shipments arriving each week and students not in the above groups will be eligible to receive iPads, after deliveries have been made to the above groups;
 - d. Students eligible for free and reduced lunch (70% of total students) have not been considered a priority group for access to technology;

- e. Elementary and middle schools in CB 2 serve sizable populations of students classified as living in poverty, with disabilities and English Language Learners:

Demographic	PS 3	PS 41	PS 130	75 Morton
Enrollment	731	694	858	841
Poverty	22% 163	7% 49	45% 385	27% 153
Students w/ Disabilities	20% 143	16% 112	16% 139	22% 185
English Lang. Learners	4% 32	2% 11	16% 137	3% 23

4. ***Remote learning is difficult for schools, teachers and school leaders*** who accomplished the unimaginable feat of transitioning to remote learning in one week; however:
- Remote learning across schools and within schools has been more variable than in traditional school environments due to different approaches and comfort with technology and access to technology amongst teachers; and,
 - Remote learning at home cannot recreate a traditional in-school environment with full time, focused attention on students from trained educators nor virtually replicate the importance of human connection;
5. ***Remote learning is difficult for all students, but particularly for our most vulnerable students:***
- Remote learning outcomes are highly dependent on variables outside a student’s control including parent/guardian availability for support, parent/guardian level of education, parent/guardian physical and mental health, availability of quiet space for study, availability of technology and many other factors;
 - Many students with IEPs are not receiving adequate mandated services or remote academic instruction in line with their learning needs;
 - Not all English Language Learners (ELLs) are receiving adequate services and academic instruction through remote learning; instructional materials are not necessarily available in appropriate languages that enable parents/guardians to support ELLs’ remote learning; and ELLs are now deprived of learning English through peer interactions inside school buildings;
 - COVID-19 is further stressing the already limited mental health resources available to NYC students:
 - According to a [2017 report](#) by Borough President Gale Brewer, there is a ratio of 1 social worker to every 800 students in Manhattan, well below the ratio of social workers recommended by the National Association for Social Workers -- 1 social worker for every 250 students and 1:50 for the most vulnerable populations.
 - Add to this an unknown numbers of students, teachers and administrators who are impacted by deaths and catastrophic illness of family and friends; and
 - The short and long term psychological impact of living through a historical health pandemic that requires social distancing for an indeterminate period of time is unknown;
6. ***In a traditional academic setting with school-based instruction, grades provide an important feedback mechanism*** for parents and guardians to understand their children’s progress in school and for schools to understand their strengths and areas that need improvement in providing individualized and rigorous instruction to students;
7. ***This health crisis has exacerbated the existing inequitable access to instruction to extraordinary levels*** and grades are often cited as a source of stress for students even during traditional educational instruction;

8. A top priority for our families and educators should be protecting the mental health of our children while ensuring their continued academic growth;
9. The DOE has granted schools independence in their approach to grading and some are choosing to revise their grading policies in response to remote learning on an ad-hoc basis;
10. Many colleges and universities, including Harvard, Stanford, Columbia, and MIT, have recognized the issues inherent in a graduated grading system in a remote learning environment during a health pandemic and moved to a binary grading model, with some universities making this change a requirement for all courses;
11. NYC needs systemwide guidance on grading to ensure students are treated equitably;

Therefore, be it resolved that Community Board 2:

1. Strongly supports the DOE's decision to issue systemwide guidance to schools for grading;
2. Supports a revised grading policy for the 2019-20 academic year that incorporates a binary grading model to indicate mastery or non-mastery of subject areas;
3. Encourages the DOE to incorporate a narrative description of each child's progress; and,
4. Urges the DOE to focus on how to a) reopen safely, b) continue to bridge and identify the digital divide, c) deliver more robust remote learning in the event schools do not fully reopen in the fall, and d) develop plans to remediate students who are currently falling behind.

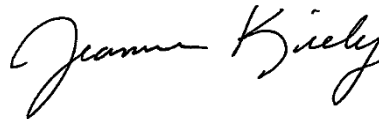
VOTE: Unanimous, with 41 Board Members in favor.

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

Sincerely,



Carter Booth, Chair
Community Board #2,



Jeannine Kiely, Chair
Schools and Education Committee
Community Board #2, Manhattan

CB/EM

- C Hon. Scott Stringer, Comptroller
Hon. Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate
Hon. Gale Brewer, Borough President
Hon. Corey Johnson, City Council Speaker
Hon. Margaret Chin, Council Member
Hon. Carlina Rivera, Council Member

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May 7, 2020

The Honorable Bill De Blasio
NYC Mayor
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

The Honorable Corey Johnson
Council Speaker
224 West 30th St, Suite 1206
New York, NY 10001

Dear Mayor De Blasio and Council Speaker Johnson:

At its Full Board meeting April 30, 2020, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

In Support of Reinstating the Summer Youth Employment Program for FY 2021

Whereas:

1. In April 2020, the mayor proposed cutting the \$134 million Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) for FY 2021;
2. The six-week program employed 75,000 youth between the ages of 14 to 24 in summer 2019;
3. Nonprofits have been seeking innovative ways to shift summer jobs to remote work sites, evaluating opportunities for tech training and certification programs and ways that SYEP workers could opt-in to jobs under the city's COVID-19 response and recovery initiatives;
4. The SYEP has operated since 1963, including through the city's fiscal crisis in the 1970s;
5. The city provides 82% of the funding for the SYEP program, with 14% from the state, 4% from the federal government and 2% from private funders (2%); and, the city's contribution equal to 0.14% of the total \$92.8 billion budget;
6. From the financial side, the SYEP can help re-invigorate the city's economy:
 - a. The funding spent to hire our youth will translate into spending that supports the local businesses and eateries frequented by participants; and,

- b. The income earned by these young people is even more crucial at this time when so many presumptive heads-of-household are without jobs and may remain so for the foreseeable future, allowing SYEP participants financial independence and possible contributions to family finances;
7. Recent academic studies also show the dramatic social benefits from the program:
- a. A Wharton study¹ found a decreased mortality rate for youth selected for SYEP; and,
 - b. An NYU study² found an increase in school attendance rates and academic engagement as a result of participation in SYEP, particularly among students with greater educational risk;
8. Cuts disproportionately impact underrepresented youth, including persons of color, NYCHA residents, justice-involved youth and children in foster care; and,
9. Locally, many CB 2-based nonprofits participate in the SYEP, including The Door and Chinese-American Planning Council.

Therefore, be it resolved that Community Board 2 strongly urges the city to reinstate the Summer Youth Employment Program for Fiscal Year 2021 to support our at-risk youth.

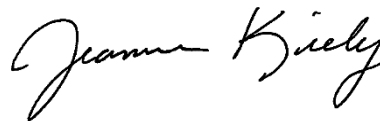
VOTE: Unanimous, with 41 Board Members in favor.

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

Sincerely,



Carter Booth, Chair
Community Board #2,



Jeannine Kiely, Chair
Schools and Education Committee
Community Board #2, Manhattan

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