



August 28, 2020

Office of the President

President
Mark F. Cannizzaro

Dear Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Carranza,

From the moment the Department of Education first began discussions on blended learning, CSA has repeatedly raised serious concerns about the staffing shortages that will arise with the implementation of the DOE's hybrid models as constructed. I've personally shared those concerns with both of you directly. Yet on Wednesday night, DOE distributed instructional guidance that alarms school leaders throughout the city. Compelling school leaders to open their buildings on September 10th while adhering to this new guidance is indefensible.

It's been clear since July that if a class must be split into cohorts to meet social distancing requirements, some students will learn remotely while others simultaneously learn in person. All summer long, school leaders, teachers, students and parents alike have all been asking the same obvious question: who will teach students learning remotely?

We were hopeful that the DOE would find some way to solve this inherent problem without creating a larger one. We expected that concerns about sufficient staffing would be adequately addressed when the Chancellor's team finally released the essential instructional guidance that NYC educators have been demanding for months.

Regrettably, the DOE has now created a potential staffing crisis with just two weeks to go before the first day of school. We applaud your administration for its focus on science throughout this pandemic. We ask that you also focus on the math. As school leaders process this new guidance, distributed on the very day they were required to share schedules with families, many will be forced to abandon their carefully considered plans and communicate to their superintendents that their school simply doesn't have enough staff to begin the year. They must now communicate to families that far too many students will not be taught remotely by their in-person teachers.

What answer and support will they receive from the DOE? What would you suggest they say to the understandably anxious families they speak with daily? It is ultimately our school leaders who must look parents in the eyes and assure them that their school building is ready to reopen. How can they pledge to deliver a quality education, worth the risks of attending school during a pandemic, when they're not even sure they have enough teachers?

School leaders will continue to work tirelessly to reimagine the school year and keep their communities safe, and our union will continue to call for a delay to in-person learning so that they and their staff have adequate time to prepare for an unimaginable, unprecedented school year, made exponentially more challenging with this instructional guidance. The current shortage of teachers only makes our previous message more urgent: New York City schools are simply not ready to reopen for in-person instruction on September 10th.

Sincerely,

Mark F. Cannizzaro
President

40 Rector Street, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10006-1729

212/ 823-2020 Tel
212/ 962-6130 Fax

www.csa-nyc.org

