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June 16, 2021
Model CEC Resolution
Calling for and Providing Guidance Regarding a Remote Option During the 2021-22 School Year

WHEREAS - The implementation of remote learning during the 2020-21 school year has highlighted that many students focus and learn better online. For instance, New York City 8th grader Veronique Mintz wrote in an op-ed for the New York Times that she has learned more in an online environment, as classes are disrupted less, she feels she has more control over her learning, and collaborations have become more effective. If students learn best remote, it is our duty to cater to their needs.

WHEREAS - Data also suggests that remote learning can be remarkably effective when it integrates multimedia content, making classes more engaging. An IBM study found that students can learn five times more material in such courses than in traditional face to face courses. The Research Institute of America furthers that online courses of this sort have increased student retention rates 25-60%.

WHEREAS - According to Dr. Thomas Perry, a Professor at the University of Birmingham School of Education whose team analyzed more than 7,000 papers, "the literature we have reviewed suggests that remote… education approaches show considerable promise and may have distinct advantages as well as disadvantages relative to solely face-to-face approaches."

WHEREAS - Remote learning also helps students familiarize themselves with technology they are likely to use more and more as they get older. Writer Luke Smith explains that learning to research online and use applications like Zoom, apps in the Google Suite, and more teaches "important lessons in digital literacy."

WHEREAS - Online learning teaches important life skills, as students have more control and learn to minimize distractions, manage their time, reach out to others, and pace their learning in a way that works best for them. This less structured environment prepares them well for work they may do later on, in which they will be afforded more freedom.

WHEREAS - Many students and school community members may continue to be vulnerable to COVID, as vaccines have not yet been approved for those younger than 12 and will not currently be required to return to in-person instruction. Although COVID rates are currently low in schools, this is still a concern, as precautions may be eased, the long-run effects of the virus are largely unknown, and new variants pose a continuing threat.

WHEREAS - A representative survey of 100 NYC families conducted last month suggests many still have concerns about returning to in-person learning, as more than a third would like to stay remote or are uncertain about in-person school next year.

WHEREAS - Deputy Chancellor Karin Goldmark quantified that 10% of NYC public schools currently lack the classroom space to safely accommodate all of their students under social distancing guidelines.

WHEREAS - While remote learning infrastructure costs money, NYC public schools received $4.5 billion in federal coronavirus relief, $900 million of which must be spent on practices to combat learning loss. Furthermore, going forward, the city can attempt to lower other costs, such as the nearly $270 million paid for iPads bought for $900 apiece.

WHEREAS - Tom Liam Lynch, the director for education policy at the Center for NYC Affairs at the New School stated "there's so many reasons to consider having virtual learning as a systematic offering," also including that "you can make classes available to kids that aren't available at their schools."

WHEREAS - Remote learning should not be universally imposed, as it admittedly is not for everyone. There are legitimate concerns about excessive screen time, lack of socialization, and engagement, and some data indicates it is harmful for certain students.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED - Contrary to Mayor DeBlasio's announcement on May 24 and in line with his and others' previous statements, the DOE will continue to offer a remote option to students who desire it in the 2021-22 school year.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED - This remote system will be separate from the in-person option, such that remote students receive distinct instruction specifically tailored to a remote format. This will improve both remote and in-person offerings, allowing greater freedom for remote teachers and freeing in-person students and instructors from "zoom in a room."

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED - The DOE will conduct research into how these parallel systems can be administered most effectively, including adopting best practices from the 20% of districts

the RAND Corporation explains already have permanent remote offerings or plan to introduce them.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED - Students tentatively will be given the option to choose between attending remotely or in-person once every quarter, so they are not 'locked into' a decision as circumstances change.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED - Remote options will be available on standby for in-person students too, so that when weather conditions or other obstacles prevent them from going to school, they will not have to fall behind.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED - The DOE will explore expanding personnel so both systems are adequately staffed, possibly through options such as keeping some of the one-third of teachers the New York Times reports are currently remote teaching online, public-private partnerships, or similar tactics to those used to hire two thousand additional teachers this year.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED - The DOE will prioritize combatting persistent inequalities in the distribution of remote learning resources, as an NY State Education Department Survey of NYC found that at the end of the 2020-21 school year, "14 percent of students did not have devices and 13 percent did not have sufficient internet access." They will also focus on racial disparities, as statewide data indicates that students in majority-Black and Brown school districts three times more likely to lack a dedicated device and four times as likely to lack Internet.

NOTE: This mock Resolution was researched and written by students of the District 3, Model CEC and submitted to CEC3 and the District 3 Superintendent for advocacy consideration. The District 3 Model CEC aims to middle schools students a voice in conversations that affect the governance of their schools. CEC3 and District 3 launched New York City's Model CEC program during the 2018-2019 school year.