



DONOVAN RICHARDS
President

CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDENT OF THE BOROUGH OF QUEENS
120-55 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11424

718.286.3000
www.queensbp.org
info@queensbp.org

August 23, 2021

Meisha Ross Porter
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chancellor Porter:

It is my understanding there are many parents in Queens concerned the New York City Department of Education (DOE) does not have a remote option for DOE students to learn for the 2021-2022 new school year, especially in light of COVID-19 positivity numbers back on the rise.

Having a remote option would be a prudent due to the current reality we are all unfortunately confronting. Queens has some of the most overcrowded schools in the five boroughs, and it is concerning how schools can safely reopen for in-person learning. With the latest rise of the Delta Variant, there are increased concerns about children's safety and risks of contracting the virus. According to your staff at the DOE, there have been 27,428 cumulative positive COVID-19 cases, including 14,793 students and 12,635 staff members as of August 18th, 2021.¹

It is widely known Queens has been the epicenter of the pandemic, and we in Queens are still heavily affected by the virus. We have to be cognizant of the fact that our children are dealing with very unusual circumstances and that this can have a lasting impact on them. We should be doing everything possible to make this challenging time less tumultuous, not just for the students but for their parents and caretakers as well.

By the DOE concluding that no remote option is needed without actual parent engagement, I believe the sentiment sends the wrong message and potentially undermines the entire parent engagement process. Having a remote option is being pro-active and vital during this unprecedented time.

In conclusion, I urge you to please provide an alternative or additional method to learning for students. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to my Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Michael Mallon, at MMallon@queensbp.org.

Sincerely,


Donovan Richards
President
Borough of Queens

Cc: The Honorable Bill de Blasio, Mayor of the City of New York

¹ <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-year/school-year-2020-21/return-to-school-2020/health-and-safety/daily-covid-case-map>