

## MEDIA ADVISORY

January 27, 2021

### **#KeepNYCSchoolsOpen Responds to Mayor's MSNBC Comments, Announce City Hall Rally**

**New York City**—Parent organizers of the #KeepNYCSchoolsOpen movement responded with impatience to Mayor Bill de Blasio's announcement on MSNBC yesterday that New York City public schools will reopen full time in September. The group, a coalition of public school families from across the five boroughs, also announced a Monday, February 1st City Hall rally to demand the immediate reopening of in-person learning for all middle and high schools and a halt to the two unlinked COVID-19 cases rule for elementary and District 75 schools.

Today is the official halfway mark of the City's 2020-2021 public school calendar. All public middle schools and high schools remain closed indefinitely, and the so-called 'two unlinked-cases' rule has resulted in hundreds of pre-Kindergarten through fifth grade school building closures since December.

"We are heartened to hear of the Mayor's confidence that schools will reopen full time in September," said Daniela Jampel, a #KeepNYCSchoolsOpen organizer. "However, on November 29, Mayor de Blasio *also* promised NYC families that the City's schools would soon be transitioning away from hybrid learning and to full-time in person learning. Yet here we are, halfway through the school year, and our children are languishing in virtual school as we speak. This continuous moving of goalposts is unacceptable."

The #KeepNYCSchoolsOpen group is planning a 9 a.m. February 1 protest at City Hall to demand the immediate reopening of in-person school at NYC middle schools and high schools, and a halt to the two unlinked cases rule. Following the protest at City Hall Park, the group will march to the headquarters of the UFT, the City's main bargaining partner in establishing the rule and shutting down schools.

"September is eight months away," Jampel said. "The parents of #KeepNYCSchoolsOpen demand that the de Blasio administration keep working to fulfill its promise of full-time, in-person school now, and not in eight months."

On Thursday, parents delivered a [letter](#) to the Mayor's Office, the Chancellor, and the head of the United Federation of Teachers, Michael Mulgrew, demanding an end to the "two unlinked cases" rule, after Mulgrew admitted the rule was purposefully designed by his union in contravention to doctor recommendations and with the goal of keeping schools shut down. Jampel said the group has yet to receive a response to the letter.

“Finally, middle schools and high schools remain closed. The mayor continues to punt the issue, claiming that we need increased testing capacity to re-open these schools. However, he has not provided any details, such as how many additional tests we need, from where these tests will be obtained, and when we expect this increased testing capacity to be developed. We continue to urge the Mayor to provide a timeline to return these students to the classrooms that were arbitrarily shut down on November 18.”

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