

# #KeepNYCSchoolsOpen

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1) Aren't New York City public schools already open?

Not really. As of now:

- Most pre-Kindergarten through 5th grade and District 75 students are slated to remain fully remote through the end of the 2020-21 school year.
- Only a small fraction of pre-K through 5th grade and District 75 students are enrolled in “hybrid” or part-time in-person school, at the discretion of each principal. Because of the UFT-designed [“two unlinked case rule.”](#) however, hundreds of these schools are closed every day, and many of these children are “in person” in name only.
- A small percentage of K-5 schools are offering five day a week instruction, at the discretion of the principal, but these schools are subject to constant closures as well.
- Starting on Feb. 25, 62,000 middle school students—only a fraction of the total population—were permitted to resume in-person, part-time hybrid school. Unfortunately, the two-case rule will also apply to these schools as well, and we expect a slew of building closures, based on the rule’s effect on elementary schools.
- High schools remain closed **indefinitely**. In fact, many high schools are being used as vaccination centers, in spite of the many empty buildings available to the city and state vaccination efforts.
- Finally, even for the students who are able to attend in-person, part-time school, a significant number of them will still be taught remotely by teachers with medical accommodations allowing them to work from home. Per the City’s agreement with the UFT, these teachers will not have to return to the classroom after receiving their vaccination.

### 2) Will New York City public schools be open next year (2021-22)?

Unclear. Although the Mayor has said he would like for schools to be open for full-time instruction in September, there is currently no plan as to how that would happen. As it is, NYC's social distancing requirements (8 feet of "personal space" per student) means there is not enough space for the fraction of students currently enrolled in in-person education to attend five days a week. We expect the demand for in-person school will increase dramatically in September, but the City has not discussed how it will accommodate all of these students. Labor leaders have already [voiced skepticism](#) about a full reopening in September 2021.

Further, a substantial number of teachers have medical accommodations exempting them from teaching in-person until June. It is not clear whether those exemptions will be continued into the 2021-22 school year. Without a robust, in-person workforce, many students may be forced to continue learning from a computer while sitting in a classroom that is monitored by a non-union aide or substitute. We do not consider schools "reopened" if students continue to learn from a laptop, even if that "learning" occurs in a technically reopened school building.

These are just two of the myriad issues that the City will have to confront ahead of the 2021-2022 school year. Other issues include whether the City will relax its social distancing requirements; how the City will ensure that parents from the most vulnerable communities, who have been the hardest hit by COVID, are confident that schools are safe for their children; and how the City will address the learning and social-emotional deficits created for the over 70% of students who will not have been in a classroom for 1.5 years.