

Subject: A Message From CSA President Mark Cannizzaro - July 22, 2020

Dear CSA Member,

As we near the end of July, it is abundantly clear that the DOE has not provided you with the guidance and relevant information necessary for you to effectively plan for the opening of school buildings and offices in the fall. You have done everything the DOE has asked of you from the onset of this pandemic, and your frustration with this alarming lack of direction is beyond understandable. CSA knows that without clear guidance and support on protocols and issues of safety, staffing, and programming, your tasks are unrealistic and insurmountable. We know that for the benefit of those you lead, you will continue to forge paths forward, to be creative and to search for solutions to seemingly intractable problems. Yet, through no fault of your own, as each day passes without clear guidance and safety assurances, it becomes less likely that we will be ready to reopen in September.

At this moment, many members are also dealing with the fallout of a poorly implemented summer school program, CEP completion, an ill-advised mandated three-day professional development program, and selection of a hybrid model of instruction for the fall. Our suggestion that the professional development be postponed fell on deaf ears as the DOE felt that it was too valuable to miss. Your feedback suggests otherwise. I find it hard to believe and extremely misguided that you are being asked to concern yourself with anything other than reopening plans for the remainder of the summer. To that end, we have advised the DOE that you do not have the necessary information to submit a proposed model for hybrid instruction by the end of the day tomorrow and argued they push the date back. As a result, they have agreed to do so, and plans now do not have to be submitted until August 14. It is our hope and expectation that DOE uses this time efficiently and appropriately guides, directs, and answers you in a manner it has not done to this point.

Recently, the DOE released a set of FAQs around reopening. Unfortunately, the DOE's FAQs do not address the real and practical concerns our team has surfaced centrally, nor many questions you have raised in the field. Therefore, CSA compiled relevant FAQs for school leaders and administrators and will now forward them to the DOE. These are questions that are imperative for the DOE to answer if it expects you to plan a September opening. You can find the FAQs [here](#). We will insist the DOE provide answers and we will share with you as they do.

Ultimately it is the responsibility of the DOE to set policy and provide resources required to implement their plans. Although this should not have to be said, no less repeated, it is also the responsibility of the DOE to clearly communicate those plans to you directly. Unless and until the Chancellor's team has done so, no plans are final or definite despite what you may have heard.

We recognize the need for frequent communication during this time and will continue to keep you informed of accurate and up-to-date information in a number of ways. We have held virtual meetings in every district, been in regular communication with our district/borough chairs as well as our executive board members who represent you, and we have taken great care to provide verified and timely information via regular Member Updates. Additionally, I will lead a citywide virtual CSA meeting in the coming days, the details of which will be shared imminently.

In the meantime, please know we are advocating relentlessly on your behalf for strong safety protocols as prerequisite to opening, clear guidance around programming and scheduling, and sufficient staffing to implement both in-person and remote instruction. You deserve nothing less, and we will not stop fighting to support you.

I look forward to speaking with you directly very soon,
In Unity,

Mark Cannizzaro