

September 1, 2020
The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We, the staff of the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts, write to you out of a sense of urgency. The school year is fast approaching. As the last days of summer wind down we, like all school staff around the city, want to be well-prepared for what we know will be a school year like none before. We want to do our jobs. We want to serve our students during a pandemic with no cure, despite all of the sickness and the loss we have seen and personally experienced in the last six months. We miss our students, who have endured so much loss, too. We want to help students in our classrooms, not through a screen. All we ask in return is that reasonable systems and protocols, as requested by the UFT, be put in place to keep our school community safe.

Unfortunately, we are not safe. While the mayor has promised enough PPE for all students and staff for the year, we do not have enough PPE for one day of school. The mayor has promised upgraded ventilation systems; our current ventilation system remains deficient, and our classroom windows do not open more than a few inches. Recently you blasted the CDC for loosening guidelines on testing. Like you, the union knows a clear, rigorous testing and tracing program must be in place to prevent the spread of the virus, but the city has failed to meet this essential requirement.

Instructional and programming concerns are secondary to matters of life and death, but if we ask parents to entrust us with their children during a pandemic, we owe them a sound educational plan. Right now, our school does not have the staff or systems in place to provide continuity of instruction between remote and in-person teaching. These essential concerns were not prioritized by our Mayor and Chancellor. Despite having many months to create a plan for this school year that provides safe, sensible instruction, our Mayor and Chancellor have not felt the sense of urgency that we feel now. So we turn to you.

Since our Mayor and Chancellor are resolved to go through with their dangerous, haphazard, ill-conceived plan, we ask that you use your powers as governor to intervene. We want to serve our students in our school building, but we cannot under these current, unsafe conditions. Therefore we, the staff at Frank Sinatra School of the Arts, are fully committed to working remotely starting September 8th and offering our students live, synchronous, fully remote instruction starting September 10th until it is safe to re-enter school buildings with a proper plan in place for safety and instruction. We are ready to teach, but we will not enter an unsafe school. We cannot ask our students to enter an unsafe school. As Governor, you have demonstrated that the best way to battle this virus is through a rigorous, systematic, science-based approach. The UFT's approach is backed by Harvard and Northwell Health. It is sensible, comprehensive, and safe.

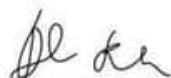
We New Yorkers have gone through so much these past months, fought so hard. Though we suffered unimaginable losses, New York's steadfast resilience in the face of this deadly disease

has provided a model for the nation, thanks to your strong leadership. Yet, we have seen what happens with COVID-19 when other leaders are not prepared or in control, when they do not listen to science, when they make spur of the moment decisions because they were not ready. People get sick. People die. For the safety of our staff, students, and families, we refuse to let that happen again, and in the words of the late John Lewis, are willing to get in "good trouble" if it means preventing a senseless loss of lives. Before we do that, we ask that you allow remote learning until appropriate safety standards are met by our Mayor and Chancellor. Our students and our city deserve better than their plan.

Sincerely,



Sandra Cohen
UFT Chapter Leader



Jacob Kalish
UFT Delegate

On behalf of the undersigned faculty members of Frank Sinatra School of the Arts High School

English

Emily Glosser
Matthew Scheiner
Aida Stefanidis
Melissa Jean Baptiste
Edward Misuraca

Mathematics

Justin Mulvey
Faye Ruiz
Marwa Elhalaby
Abdel Elmoussaoui

Science

Caroline Lightbourn
Sandra McNeil
Daniel Madden
Rana Chakrabarty

Librarian

Michele Daniel

Social Studies

Matthew Lange
Robert Skalor
Michael Rokofsky
Thomas Gurba
Cory Abrams

Foreign Language

Alicia Sammarco
Keith Kindler
Emelina Razik

Physical Education

Michael Medea
John Billera
Matthew Pullano

Secretary

Vanessa Rabines

Special Education

Susan Gaska
Fabian Gonzalez
Daniel Pupplo
John McKillip
Valeria Jacobs

Guidance Department

Mwaniki Mwangi
Felisa Valeta
Jennifer Furman
Christine Soria
Caridad Gallo

Arts

Laura Epstein
Jason Spagnouli
Ani Udovicki
Steven Kirby
Kelly Brady
Bill Liebeskind
Nicole Spata

Dmitry Gubin
Heidi Best
Eli Kronenberg
Jamie Cacciola Price
Jane Kahn
Olivier Heuts