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Resolution 12 on calling for amnesty for budget deficit

WHEREAS In 2021, many public schools are burdened with significant budget deficits because actual enrollment is well below what schools could have reasonably projected during the pandemic;

WHEREAS through last fall, many families made difficult and personal decisions to leave the public school system to enroll in education programs that provide more in-person learning and/or safety when faced with the ongoing pandemic. Lack of clarity from the city about how and when schools would reopen, last minute reopening delays, health and safety concerns, blended learning options that typically provided only one to two in-person school days per week and changing rules for opting back into blended learning all contributed to families making alternative arrangements;

WHEREAS New York City public schools are primarily funded on a per student basis through the Fair Student Funding;

- a. In late May, each school submits an estimated budget to the Department of Education for the next school year based on enrollment projections;
- b. Each school is subject to **midyear adjustment** of funding based on how actual enrollment compares to enrollment projections from late May; if a school's student register exceeds its projection, the school will receive additional funds to support its operations; however, if a school's student register is below projections, the school must pay back funding for lost student enrollment;
- c. More than 90% of the Fair Student Funding is used to pay salaries for teachers and support staff, making midyear adjustment extremely difficult for most schools;
- d. Many schools are still not funded at 100% of the Fair Student Funding formula, in essence starting the school year with a deficit;

WHEREAS under the DOE's Deficit Repayment Plan, schools with deficits greater than \$100,000 typically "repay" funds over a several year installment plan, saddling schools with debt during the time they need more resources not less to invest in staffing and technology and address learning loss and social emotional trauma suffered during the pandemic;

WHEREAS In 2013, the DOE instituted an amnesty program in recognition of successive years of budget reductions following the great recession that made it difficult for schools to repay their deficits;

WHEREAS, the expenses associated with unforeseen events, such as the pandemic, should not be borne by individual schools;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED Community Education Council for District 20 calls on the City of New York, Mayor Bill de Blasio, New York City School Chancellor Richard Carranza, and Executive Superintendent and future Chancellor Meisha Porter to institute amnesty for school deficits so that our schools can emerge from this pandemic financially sound and best positioned to meet the learning needs of our city's students.