

Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council

Tweed Courthouse *52 Chamber Street, New York 10007

CPAC Parent Advisory Council Board

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July 2021

Chancellor Meisha Ross Porter
Department of Education
Tweed Courthouse
52 Chambers Street
New York, New York 10007

Dear Chancellor Porter,

As the Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council, we are proposing the following request regarding PA/PTA and Presidents' Council in person meetings beginning in September.

As per the email we received regarding the Governor lifting the state-imposed emergency declaration to curb the spread of COVID-19, which means that public bodies are no longer authorized to hold meetings remotely. Until and unless we hear differently from the State, we should be planning for in-person meetings effective immediately, which should not exclude PA/PTA and Presidents' Council meetings.

During the last year and a half, we have seen a dramatic increase in attendance in our public meetings. Holding meetings virtually has expanded access for many of our families, and we are advocating for flexibility so that we can continue to incorporate remote participation as we move forward. As well as to return to in-person meetings to continue to build capacity in our school communities. Since Citywide and Community Education Councils will be able to use virtual platforms to livestream in-person meetings, a quorum of members must be present in-person, and the public must have access to attend the meeting in-person. We strongly encourage you to allow PA/PTAs and Presidents' Councils to do the same if they choose.

PA/PTA's and Presidents' Councils are parent members of their school communities and although do not fall under the open meeting law (OML); we share valuable information with our membership and parent leaders.

We are presenting the following requests:

- PA/PTA's and Presidents' Councils should be allowed to host meetings in our school buildings/districts.
- PA/PTA's and Presidents' Councils should be issued an extended use permit for the purpose of holding meetings in DOE buildings.
- PA/PTA's and Presidents' Councils should be given space and access (laptop, Wi-Fi, etc.) from the school/district to be able to conduct the meeting in-person and virtually to allow greater parent participation.

As per Chancellor's Regulation A-660, PA/PTA's and Presidents' Councils are entitled to **free** use of school buildings, including school safety or security coverage, for up to 110 hours per year outside of school hours. The executive board is responsible for obtaining the necessary permits.

The 110 hours may be used 12 months a year; unused hours may be rolled over month-to-month but expire at the end of the school year.

If there is more than one school in the building, each PA/PTA is entitled to 110 hours of **free** use per year

PA/PTAs that wish to use the school building during school hours must obtain permission from the principal. Use of the school building during school hours does not count against the 110 hours per year of **free** use.

We respectfully request these changes to take place by the reopening of schools in the fall.

We would like to meet with you to discuss these proposals.

Sincerely,
CPAC Executive Board