

The Chinese American Citizens Alliance of Greater N.Y. (CACAGNY)

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Press Statement
April 27, 2020

CACAGNY Endorses a “Do No Harm” Grading System for the 2019 School Year, Condemns Council Member for Exploiting the Miseries of the Pandemic with His Attacks on Education Standards

Due to Remote Learning in NYC public schools, the DOE proposed on Friday (April 24) for the 2019-2020 academic year to use Satisfactory or Needs Improvement (S/N) as the final grade for all K-8th graders and to maintain existing grading for high school students. CACAGNY opposes this proposal, and urges Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Carranza to adopt a “No Harm” grading policy in all grades of our public schools. This policy would keep numeric grades for the remote learning period, and the final grade would drop the lowest grade of all the marking periods. Maintaining the existing grading system while dropping the lowest grade would allow for grades to increase, but not decrease, during the remote learning period.

On the same day as the DOE announcement, in a letter to Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Carranza, Councilmember Mark Treyger led some of the most radical anti-academic standards advocates in New York City to sign a “Grading for Equity” proposal. The concluding paragraph states, *“Moving forward, we hope we can deepen the conversation on what the purpose of schooling and education should be, what we should value and elevate, what we can eliminate, and how to create a school system that is authentically rooted in social justice values. This pandemic is an opportunity to dismantle systems of oppression and build a society that honors our collective humanity. We look forward to creating this school system with you.”*

CACAGNY is extremely disappointed that CM Treyger would exploit the miseries of the pandemic to attack education standards and cover up the deficiencies of the education system. We are appalled he would make a New York City DOE diploma a worthless piece of paper. Disadvantaged Chinese Americans are among those who greatly value education and put a high priority on academic standards. For the chairman of the City Council Education Committee and the only elected official to support and sign his name on top of such a travesty of an education proposal is a disgrace. The poverty issue mentioned in the letter existed when children of all economic levels were graded before the COVID19 crisis hit. What CM Treyger is saying is that it’s OK for children who are able to continue their education remotely to suffer, while there is no measurement and incentive to improve learning for all children. Furthermore, taking advantage of the devastation of the current crisis, what Treyger is saying is that it's OK for the DOE to avoid accountability and perpetuate grade fraud even after the pandemic passes.

CM Treyger’s letter is full of code words for destroying academic standards, is an attack on students who study and work hard, and encourages evasion of accountability by the DOE. CACAGNY strongly believes grades serve an important function for students, parents and teachers to understand if a student is learning, reveal the students’ strengths and weaknesses, and determine whether or not interventions are warranted or modifications to their instruction are necessary. Introducing new grading schemes during a time of greatly increased uncertainty presents enormous challenges and stressors to families, particularly those that face already existing access barriers of language and technology. Therefore, CACAGNY urges the DOE to withdraw the above proposal of only S/N. Adopting a “Do No Harm” grading policy proposed by PLACE NYC makes the most sense: keep grading consistent during remote learning and drop the lowest grade in determining the final grade.

For CM Treyger to associate himself with such anti-merit advocacy groups is an insult to his longtime supporters in the Chinese community. CM Treyger needs to apologize and remove his name from the letter immediately.

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Founded in 1895 in San Francisco, the Chinese American Citizens Alliance is the oldest Chinese American civil rights organization in the United States. CACAGNY is its New York Chapter. www.CACAGNY.org

1895年在舊金山成立之同源會，是美國最古老的民權組織。紐約同源會是這個地區的分會。