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COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
2176 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6100

January 11, 2024

Mayor Eric Adams  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Adams:

We were alarmed to see recent news reports that a school in Brooklyn was closed and students sent home in order to shelter nearly 2,000 migrants.<sup>1</sup>

As you know, James Madison High School was ordered to close on Wednesday, January 10, because of the decision to house migrants from Floyd Bennett Field in the school's gym. These students were forced into unplanned virtual learning, and it remains unclear how long the disruption will last or whether there will be future disruptions. Furthermore, it appears this was a last-minute decision with little notice given to affected parents.

It is unacceptable that you are disrupting the education of students by closing their school and forcing them to use a method of learning that leads to suboptimal outcomes. Data collected before and during the COVID-19 pandemic have shown that in-person learning, on the whole, leads to better academic outcomes, greater levels of student engagement, higher rates of attendance, and better social and emotional well-being, and ensures access to critical school services and extracurricular activities when compared to remote learning.<sup>2</sup>

We find this school closure completely abhorrent. As we have made clear time and time again, schools should be used for educating students, not housing illegal aliens. It is grossly unfair to penalize school children for a problem not of their making, and it is entirely irresponsible to put illegal aliens over our own citizens.

This failure is directly related to President Biden's catastrophic border policies. Customs and Border Patrol agents encountered approximately 3 million illegal aliens in fiscal year 2023,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://nypost.com/2024/01/09/metro/migrants-evacuated-from-floyd-bennett-field-due-to-high-winds/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus/supporting-students-during-covid-19-pandemic#:~:text=Data%20collected%20before%20and%20during,critical%20school%20services%20and%20extra-curricular>

which is nearly double the number encountered in fiscal year 2021.<sup>3</sup> As the Heritage Foundation has pointed out, if those caught in 2023 formed a new city, it would be the third biggest in America, smaller than only New York and Los Angeles.<sup>4</sup> The Biden administration is directly responsible for this surge. According to a recent news report, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas told Border Patrol Agents that “above 85 [percent]” of migrants currently being encountered are being released into the U.S. interior.<sup>5</sup>

School children in New York City, or anywhere in the country, should never bear the burden of the Biden administration’s failure to secure the border. It is shameful that children enrolled in New York City’s public schools had their education interrupted because Democrats have shown so little interest in stopping illegal immigration. The nation’s children should come first, not those who break the law.

We request that you answer the following questions by no later than January 25, 2024.

- 1.) Why was James Madison High School selected as a site to shelter migrants when doing so would materially disrupt students’ education?
- 2.) How, if at all, were migrants vetted before being allowed to enter school property?
- 3.) How much notice was given to parents before the school was closed?
- 4.) How long will the school remain closed to students? Is it possible there will be future school closures?
- 5.) What will be done to prepare the school for students when the school is no longer being used as a shelter and how will these preparations be funded?
- 6.) Are there any plans to use other public elementary or secondary school facilities to house migrants? In what circumstances and for how long would other such schools be required to do so? Please describe all plans in detail.

If you have any questions, please contact RJ Martin at [rj.martin@mail.house.gov](mailto:rj.martin@mail.house.gov) or 202-225-4527. We look forward to hearing from you.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.heritage.org/immigration/commentary/the-borderline-the-border-crisis-the-numbers>;  
<https://www.dailysignal.com/2023/06/14/dereliction-duty-republicans-build-case-against-dhs-secretary-alejandro-mayorkas/>; <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47556>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.heritage.org/immigration/commentary/the-borderline-the-border-crisis-the-numbers>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/nyc-high-school-students-forced-into-remote-learning-as-2000-migrants-sheltered-in-school-instead>

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Virginia Foxx in blue ink.

Virginia Foxx  
Chairwoman  
House Committee on Education and the Workforce

Handwritten signature of Aaron Bean in black ink.

Aaron Bean  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Early Childhood,  
Elementary, and Secondary Education  
House Committee on Education and the  
Workforce

Handwritten signature of Brandon Williams in black ink.

Brandon Williams  
Member of Congress