



July 27, 2021

Howard Zucker MD, JD
Commissioner, New York Department of Health
Corning Tower
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Dr. Zucker,

As you might imagine, as of this point in the summer, school districts are in the process of completing their plans to return to school in the fall of 2021. With that being said, there are still a number of questions that exist and guidance from the New York State Department of Health is critical to ensure that we are able to fulfill our mission to the children and families we serve. In addition to our need to plan, I'm sure you can sympathize that many parents have not received definitive guidance from their schools as of yet, and many are unclear what arrangements they need to make for their children and family for fall.

In past weeks, we have noted that some states have already provided timely guidance to their school districts for the fall of 2021, such as [New Jersey](#), [Massachusetts](#) and others. By way of this letter, we are once again asking for immediate guidance on the following topics:

1. **Transportation:** Will schools be required to continue to socially distance students on school busses? Will students and staff on school busses be required to wear masks? Please note, if rules on social distancing during transportation are not changed, some districts will not have the capacity to return all students to school every day, therefore, districts will need to continue with a hybrid approach (Day A/Day B).
2. **Distancing:** Will the guidance for in-person school instruction still be three feet, and will there be any exceptions? At the three foot social distancing requirement some districts may be unable to use their current cafeteria space.
3. **Remote Learning:** Will the Department of Health mandate any "accommodations" on behalf of students or staff beyond that which the ADA would require (e.g., remote/virtual learning/work)?
4. **Testing:** Will there be any requirement for COVID-19 screening testing of students and staff?
5. **Masking:** Will there be any masking mandates for students or staff in the fall?
6. **Athletics:** Training and practices for school sports are due to start next month, however we do not know the status of particular sports and what guidance to follow.





It is critical that we receive timely guidance on these topics. Our districts understand that COVID -19 and the transmission of the Delta variant (resulting in increasing transmission rates) have added an element of uncertainty for all involved. However, we believe that one of the best mitigation tools we can employ is to have a clear and well communicated system in place that considers those variants, which could ebb and flow throughout the fall. School districts in the WSWHE region continue to stand ready to work with the Department of Health should you wish to put together a committee of educators and Department staff to talk through these most important issues.

Sincerely,

James P. Dexter,
District Superintendent of Schools, WSWHE BOCES

On behalf of the 31 Superintendent of Schools in the WSWHE BOCES region

Michael Healey, Argyle CSD
 Kenneth Slentz, Ballston Spa CSD
 Michael Graney, Bolton CSD
 Douglas Silvernell, Cambridge CSD
 Mark Stratton, Corinth CSD
 Kevin Froats, Fort Ann CSD
 Mark Bessen, Interim, Fort Edward UFSD
 Brita Donovan, Galway CSD
 Paul Jenkins, Glens Falls City SD
 Brian George, Glens Falls Common
 Thomas McGurl, Granville CSD
 Mark Fish, Greenwich CSD
 Beecher Baker, Hadley Luzerne CSD
 Andrew Cook, Hartford CSD
 Daniel Ward, Hudson Falls CSD
 David Snide, Indian Lake CSD

Michael Markwica, Johnsburg CSD
 Lynne Rutnik, Lake George CSD
 Bruce Potter, Mechanicville City SD
 Kyle McFarland, Minerva CSD
 Christian Fisher, Newcomb CSD
 Michele French, North Warren CSD
 Kyle Gannon, Queensbury UFSD
 Mark Doody, Interim, Salem CSD
 Michael Patton, Saratoga Springs City SD
 Ryan Sherman, Schuylerville CSD
 Kristine Orr, South Glens Falls CSD
 Patricia Morris, Stillwater CSD
 John Goralski, Warrensburg CSD
 Patrick Pomerville, Waterford-Halfmoon UFSD
 Patrick Dee, Whitehall CSD





cc: Dr. Betty A. Rosa, New York State Commissioner of Education
James P. Dexter, District Superintendent of Schools, WSWHE BOCES
Kathy Jo McIntyre, Washington County Public Health Services
Cathy Medick, Saratoga County Public Health Services
Dr. Daniel Kuhles, Saratoga County Public Health Services
Ginelle Jones, Warren County Public Health
Erica Mahoney, Hamilton County Public Health
Linda Beers, Essex County Health Department

Members of the New York State Assembly
Jake Ashby
John McDonald
Matthew Simpson
Robert Smullen
Mary Beth Walsh
Carrie Woerner

Members New York State Senate
Daphne Jordan
Dan Stec
James Tedisco

