



January 27, 2022

Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

Commissioner Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH
New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower, Empire State Plaza,
Albany, New York 12203

Dear Governor Hochul and Commissioner Bassett,

As you are aware, the last two years have brought forth a number of challenges for every government agency, business, and citizen in New York State. We can all be proud of the way our communities have responded to the COVID crisis and how our citizenry have responded to keep their neighbors healthy.

As school leaders, we are especially proud of the way in which our students and their families have worked with us to keep our schools open for in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible. The flexibility and understanding that our families and students have demonstrated has been extraordinary and, with their partnership, we can affirmatively state that the safest place for the children we serve is within our schools.

From our perspective, it is now time to forge ahead, and to develop a **“Pathway to Normalcy.”** In speaking with our families, the consistent message we receive is how they need to get back to normal. Frankly, they need more consistency from their schools, and we agree with that concept. Therefore, we are asking the state to consider working with school leaders to develop a **“Pathway to Normalcy,”** which consists of the following key components:

Roadmap on Masking: While we all understand the need for masking during high rates of transmission, providing specific metrics for when this requirement can be optional as transmission rates decrease or vaccination rates reach a certain threshold is essential to maintaining our focus on teaching and learning.

Seeing the Whole Student: After school and extracurricular activities are an essential component of education and a lifeline that brings many of our students to school and these activities have never been more important for our students. However, the current guidelines make participation a significant challenge given the vaccination requirements. We support and advocate vaccination efforts within our communities, however there is a disconnect of logic between school day events (e.g., PE class, student group work) and after school events (e.g., chess club, athletics) which makes it very difficult to explain to our parents and caregivers.

We would like to thank you for the changes you have already made to the state's procedures, allowing more students to remain in school and for the millions of tests you

have made available to schools across the state. In doing so, this allows us to continue to work with families, keep sick children home, and to provide families with the necessary resources to make informed decisions about children who are symptomatic. In the meantime, we will continue to work with the families we serve to understand the need for higher vaccination rates.

Sincerely,



Andrew Cook
Superintendent
Hartford Central School District
Chairperson, WSWHE BOCES CSO Advocacy Committee

On behalf of the 31 Superintendents of Schools in the WSWHE BOCES region:

Superintendents of Schools in the WSWHE BOCES region

Michael Healey, Argyle CSD
Kenneth Slentz, Ballston Spa CSD
Michael Graney, Bolton CSD
Dr. Douglas Silvernell, Cambridge CSD
Dr. Mark Stratton, Corinth CSD
Justin Hoskins, Fort Ann CSD
Mark Bessen, Interim, Fort Edward UFSD
Dr. 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, Johnsbury CSD
Douglas Huntley, Interim, 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
Dr. Michael Patton, Saratoga Springs City SD
Dr. Ryan Sherman, Schuylerville CSD
Kristine Orr, South Glens Falls CSD
Patricia Morris, Stillwater CSD
Amy Langworthy, Warrensburg CSD
Patrick Pomerville, Waterford-Halfmoon UFSD
Patrick Dee, Whitehall CSD

cc: James P. Dexter, District Superintendent, WSWHE Supervisory District
Dr. Betty A. Rosa, New York State Commissioner of Education
Tina McDougall, Washington County Public Health Services
Cathy Medick, Saratoga County Public Health Services
Daniel Kuhles, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner 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
Michael Benedetto
Carrie Woerner
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Members New York State Senate

Daphne Jordan
Shelly Mayer
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