



March 19, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This morning, the Centers for Disease Control revised their guidelines for distance requirements in schools. This is very welcome news, but it is just the first step. Because we must follow state guidance, we need the state to immediately put this new federal guidance into state regulations, requirements, and/or best practices for our schools. Once New York State acts on this federal guidance, we can do what we all want – increase the number of in-person days for our hybrid students.

We ask that you join us in contacting Governor Cuomo and the New York State Department of Health to urge them to update their protocols in a practical, science-based manner so that our schools can open to four or five days per week of in-person instruction this year and fully reopen in September. Our students need to be in our schools. Contact the Governor by using this form: [Contact Governor Andrew M. Cuomo](#) or call 518-474-8390. Messages to the NYSDOH can be sent to [dohweb@health.ny.gov](mailto:dohweb@health.ny.gov).

The district is currently preparing for this welcomed shift in our educational delivery model so that we are ready to go as soon as possible when the state gives the official go-ahead. We are mobilizing the many operations that will be changing – busing routes, food service delivery, cafeteria usage, instructional scheduling, furniture layouts, etc. This takes time, but be assured that everyone is working to prepare for this “new normal.” Our goal is to come together for more in-person instruction as quickly and as safely as possible. We will still provide remote instruction for those families who have chosen that option for the remainder of the year.

### **Travel**

As we reported last week, the state will lift travel restrictions as of April 1. In order to continue this forward momentum, we all need to work together to keep our schools and communities safe. If families decide to travel, we ask that all individuals use caution and continue practicing the proven safety measures of maintaining distance, wearing masks, and washing hands thoroughly and often. We wish for families to enjoy our upcoming Spring Recess April 2-9, but we urge everyone to keep safety in mind. Upon return from travel or at any time, we ask if students have symptoms or are not feeling well to please stay home and not risk potential exposure to others.

### **State Assessments**

The Board of Regents also made an announcement this week. The state has applied for a second waiver to the US Department of Education to suspend state assessments this year. No final decision has been made as of this time. In the event the waiver is denied, the Board of Regents has announced the following:


- Only four Regents exams will be administered in June this year: English Language Arts (ELA), Algebra 1, Earth Science, and Living Environment.
- The Grades 3-8 assessments in Math and ELA will be shortened to one session administered in one day rather than two.
- Only the written portion of the Grades 4 and 8 Science assessment will be held. The performance portion will not be administered.

Our schools and district will provide more information as we receive it.

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On behalf of the district, I thank you all for your tireless efforts to support our children and schools. Working together, we will manage this next phase of the pandemic in a safe manner so that our schools can open more fully to in-person instruction and remain safe as we adhere to state guidance and best practices for education. If you have questions, please contact your school office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas J. Douglas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "D".

Dr. Thomas J. Douglas  
Superintendent of Schools