



August 6, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians:

You may have seen news reports that the state has just announced that it will not provide guidance for the opening of schools this year. Districts have been waiting for promised assistance from the Governor and the New York State Department of Health for many weeks and months, and now we are told that it is not coming. As of yet, we have not received definitive information, nor has it been made clear who has the final authority to make such decisions. Districts are seeking assistance and clarity now that the state has abdicated its responsibility for public health according to Dr. Howard Zucker, the director of the New York State Health Department.

We are currently working with the county executive and health department, as well as consulting with neighboring districts, to determine the best course of action for the new school year in the Southern Tier. Additionally, we are seeking guidance from the New York State Education Department on its requirements for schools. We have learned a great deal over the past 17 months, and we have built strong relationships with our local public health experts. Together we will make responsible decisions to best protect our students and staff while we continue to provide a quality education for all students.

At this time, the district plans to bring all students to school for five days per week at all levels and use remote instruction only for forced closures, if needed, throughout the school year. There are other important details yet to be determined (ex. masking, testing, distancing, etc.). Once we have definitive information and guidance, the district will share it with you. Our hope is to know more by the end of next week. We ask for your continued patience and to understand that we are working to do what is best for all students, in consultation with local, regional, and state authorities.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Douglas
Superintendent of Schools