



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	Michael Markwica, Johnsbury CSD
Kenneth Slentz, Ballston Spa CSD	Douglas Huntley, Interim, Lake George CSD
Michael Graney, Bolton CSD	Bruce Potter, Mechanicville City SD
Dr. Douglas Silvernell, Cambridge CSD	Kyle McFarland, Minerva CSD
Dr. Mark Stratton, Corinth CSD	Christian Fisher, Newcomb CSD
Justin Hoskins, Fort Ann CSD	Michele French, North Warren CSD
Mark Bessen, Interim, Fort Edward UFSD	Kyle Gannon, Queensbury UFSD
Dr. Brita Donovan, Galway CSD	Mark Doody, Interim, Salem CSD
Paul Jenkins, Glens Falls City SD	Dr. Michael Patton, Saratoga Springs City SD
Brian George, Glens Falls Common	Dr. Ryan Sherman, Schuylerville CSD
Thomas McGurl, Granville CSD	Kristine Orr, South Glens Falls CSD
Mark Fish, Greenwich CSD	Patricia Morris, Stillwater CSD
Beecher Baker, Hadley Luzerne CSD	Amy Langworthy, Warrensburg CSD
Andrew Cook, Hartford CSD	Patrick Pomerville, Waterford-Halfmoon UFSD
Daniel Ward, Hudson Falls CSD	Patrick Dee, Whitehall CSD
David Snide, Indian Lake 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	Robert Smullen
Michael Benedetto	John McDonald
Carrie Woerner	Mary Beth Walh
Matthew Simpson	

**Members New York State Senate**

Daphne Jordan  
Shelly Mayer  
Dan Stec  
James Tedisco