



February 26, 2022

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

Dear Commissioner Bassett,

As you are aware, on Friday, February 25, 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued new guidelines for masking, and in particular, updated guidelines for masking in schools.

As you may recall, recently I wrote on behalf of our region's superintendents requesting guidance to help transition the focus of our schools away from COVID distractions and restrictions back to our core mission of educating students.

I write today with a sense of urgency asking that you implement the following measures, before students return from winter recess on Monday, February 28:

- In compliance with the new CDC recommendations, **remove the mandate for masking for school facilities and on school busses** in counties identified by the CDC at low or medium levels of risk,
- Provide guidance to school districts, parents, and staff about the factors that would trigger the reintroduction of masks, and;
- Provide guidance to school districts on changes to other mitigation layers including social distancing.

Sincerely,

Gladys I. Cruz, Ph.D.
District Superintendent

cc: Dr. Betty A. Rosa, Commissioner, New York State Education Department
Dr. Lester W. Young, Jr., Chancellor, New York State Board of Regents
Josephine Victoria Finn, Vice Chancellor, New York State Board of Regents
Dr. James N. Baldwin, Senior Deputy Commissioner for Education Policy, New York State
Education Department
Assemblymember Jake Ashby

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