

New York State Support for Mandated COVID-19 Surveillance Testing

WHEREAS school buildings in New York State were permitted to reopen in fall 2020 when state-wide positivity rates were well below the 5% marker set by the Governor if school districts fulfilled the COVID-19 guidance of the NYS Department of Health and Education Department; and

WHEREAS NYS COVID-19 community positivity rates have been climbing in November 2020, and surveillance testing is one mechanism used to track viral spread and help maintain the health and safety of our school communities; and

WHEREAS under the Governor's Micro-Cluster Initiative, school-based random surveillance testing is mandated to keep school buildings open for in person learning; and

WHEREAS public school districts have faced exceptional burdens on finances and administrative and faculty time and effort to ensure the health, safety, and ongoing education of the young people of our state; and

WHEREAS schools in locations where community transmission rates have resulted in the designation of a micro-cluster zone are not set up from a financial, logistical or regulatory perspective to take on the added burden of random surveillance testing; and

WHEREAS county departments of health are currently overwhelmed in coordinating the community-wide COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS rapid antigen tests provided by the state to some school districts have been determined by public health professionals to be insufficiently accurate to permit a negative rapid test to clear individuals to re-enter school buildings, necessitating a further round of testing that may require administration by medical personnel; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that:

The Board of Education of the Croton-Harmon Union Free School District calls upon New York State leaders to ensure that public school districts receive the financial, logistical and regulatory support to undertake mandated COVID-19 surveillance testing of students, faculty and staff, to ensure that school districts are not forced to keep school buildings closed due to lack of resources to ensure the safety of students and adults in school buildings.

The Board of Education directs the District Clerk to send a copy of this resolution to the following people:

- Sandra Galef, State Assembly Member

- Peter Harckham, State Senator
- Andrew Cuomo, the Governor of the State of New York
- Carl Heastie, the Speaker of the New York State Assembly
- Andrea Stewart-Cousins, the Majority Leader of the New York State Senate
- Michael Benedetto, State Assemblyman, Chair, Committee on Education
- Shelley Mayer, State Senate, Chair, Committee on Education
- Dr. Howard A. Zucker, Commissioner of Health
- Betty Rosa, NYS Interim Commissioner of Education
- Andrew Brown, Vice-Chancellor, NYS Board of Regents
- Frances Wills, NYS Board of Regents
- Karen Belanger, Executive Director, Westchester Putnam School Boards Association

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DATE: 11/23/2020