



MASSAPEQUA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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May 27, 2021

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS Capitol Building, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We are writing to express our concerns regarding the mandate to mask K-12 students for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year and the possibility of that policy continuing into the 2021-22 school year.

We understand the complexity of managing the COVID-19 pandemic. We understand why last year it was necessary to have a one-size fits all approach, as no one knew how the pandemic would progress, and as our Governor, you were responsible for keeping all New Yorkers safe. We even understood the recommendation to have a universal mask policy in September. No one knew how the schools would manage with the virus. However, we are now nearing the end of May 2021, and we have demonstrated that the school environment is safe, often safer than the surrounding community, yet we are being held to a different standard than everywhere else. Many New Yorkers have been vaccinated. In fact, Nassau County has the highest vaccination rate in New York State. Furthermore, our health professionals have experience treating COVID-19 with readily available therapeutics, and the NYS current positivity rate as of today is .70%!

It is now time for local school districts, along with their county executives and local departments of health, to make the decisions for their communities. The localities are in the best position to determine the needs of their community members, as they have first-hand knowledge of any viral spread and have learned how to effectively keep their constituents safe. Further, school districts are held accountable by all our stakeholders to ensure we are being responsible and following what science dictates.

Since the pandemic began last March, you have said repeatedly that we need to follow the science. The science dictates that masking our K-12 population is unnecessary at this time. Our current positivity rate in Nassau County is .6%. It is extremely rare for school age children to have severe illness due to Covid-19.

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
May 27, 2021

All our staff have had the opportunity to get vaccinated, thereby reducing their risk of experiencing severe symptoms or death. We even provided an on- site opportunity for staff to get vaccinated, where up to 300 staff and their families had the ability to receive the vaccine. Outside of school, our kids are in sports, dance, attending birthday parties and play dates, eating at restaurants, all without wearing masks, and our community transmission rate is near zero. Our 7-day average ranges from .04 to.07 percent!

We are requesting once again to allow local control of the mitigation factors in our community, based on current positivity rates, scientific data, and best practices. We can responsibly assess our situation and adjust as necessary. A “one size fits all” approach is no longer effective nor necessary in managing this pandemic. New York is a large and complex state, different regions have different needs, and we must be able to make our own decisions at the local level to protect our community. We are grateful for your leadership during this pandemic; however, we ask you to please return control to the local county and local school districts.

Sincerely,
Massapequa Board of Education

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Kerry Wachter, Board of Education President

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Jeanine Caramore, Board of Education Vice President

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Gary Baldinger, Board of Education Secretary

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