



CARMEL CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MARY-MARGARET ZEHR
Superintendent of Schools

February 26, 2022

Dear Governor Hochul,

As Superintendent of the Carmel Central School District, I am sending a follow-up correspondence to our district's initial letter on February 16, 2022. That letter requested New York State to release metrics from the New York State (NYS) Department of Health or allow local county health departments to lift the school mask mandate in their respective communities.

Yesterday, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) released metrics guidelines for mask-wearing. In areas that are considered low risk, like Putnam County, the CDC indicated that mask-wearing in schools should be left up to personal choice regarding potential risk factors. Furthermore, Dr. Greta Massetti, a senior CDC official stated, "We know that also because children are relatively at lower risk from a severe illness that schools can be safe places for children. And so, for that reason, we're recommending that schools use the same guidance that we are recommending in general community settings."

Based on the CDC metrics provided yesterday, I urge you to rescind the New York State mask mandate as soon as possible. We recognize that all members of our district community have differing opinions on masks and levels of comfort with mask-wearing, and we support parent choice in making the best decision regarding masks for their children. In our area, the positivity rates of COVID-19 have decreased significantly, and it is time to base decisions on the metrics of low risk.

Sincerely,

Mary-Margaret Zehr
Superintendent of Schools

cc: Dr. Mary Bassett, New York State Department of Health Commissioner
Dr. Betty A. Rosa, New York State Commissioner of Education
Peter Harckham, New York State Senator
Sue Serino, New York State Senator
Sandy Galef, Member of New York State Assembly
Kevin M. Byrne, Member of New York State Assembly
Kieran Michael Lalor, Member of New York State Assembly

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