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SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Patrick Harrigan

June 16, 2021

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
Executive Chamber
The State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Howard A. Zucker, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner of Health
New York State Department of Health
Empire State Plaza,
Corning Tower
Albany, New York 12237

Dear Governor Cuomo and Dr. Zucker:

In light of your June 15th announcement that “we will be back to life as normal” in New York State, and the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions in sports & recreation, child care, camps, food services, amusement & family entertainment, movie theaters, and other areas of the community, the Half Hollow Hills Central School District governance team writes to urge you to re-examine New York State’s guidance on indoor mask wearing for P-12 Schools.

Our employees and students participate in all of these other community settings throughout their daily lives, outside the walls of our buildings. Holding educational settings to a completely different standard creates confusion and strife for the members of our educational community. We have all seen infection rates plummet, as measured by the CDC COVID Tracker, New York State, Suffolk County and our own District metrics. As New York State has crossed the 70% vaccination threshold and Long Island has passed 75%, it is time for alignment between P-12 Schools and the rest of the community concerning universal mask wearing.

As the COVID-19 infection rates in our region remain at an all time low and vaccination rates continue to increase, indoor mask wearing should be optional based on an individual parent or employee choice. Having mask wearing be neither required nor prohibited in our schools is something we can support and implement successfully in our educational setting.

Thank you in advance for aligning the guidance for P-12 Schools with the rest of the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Geringswald".

Eric Geringswald, President
Half Hollow Hills Board of Education

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patrick Harrigan".

Dr. Patrick Harrigan, Superintendent
Half Hollow Hills Central School District

cc: Dr. Rochelle Walensky, Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention