

South Lewis Central School District

Mr. Douglas Premo, Superintendent

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Dear South Lewis School Community:

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, schools have proven to be extremely safe places for students and staff. The infection and transmission rates have been and continue to be significantly lower than that of the general population. This is primarily due to strong and consistently implemented preventative measures taken by schools such as social distancing, mask wearing, hand washing and routine cleaning and disinfecting.

Recently, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) announced that three feet of separation between students in classrooms is sufficient to ensure their safety (vs. the previous guidance of six feet). This development is welcome news and one that could open an opportunity for a full return of students to daily in-person attendance. Unfortunately, at this time this new CDC guidance has yet to be adopted by New York State.

We have always maintained that students need to be in school. Therefore, with this new information in hand, we will continue to aggressively advocate to both our local and State political and health leaders for this outcome.

It will be critical that any new guidance from New York State not only addresses social distancing in the classroom, but other areas as well. For example, social distancing could still prove to be a hindrance to a full return if it is not addressed in other school operational areas such as busing, food service/cafeteria, or large group instruction classrooms (e.g. Physical Education, Chorus/Band, etc.). Additionally, we will need to fully review and understand any revised guidance. There could be changes and requirements regarding mask wearing, use of barriers, COVID-19 testing, or a myriad of other areas.

We are hopeful that the future will bring welcome changes to the New York State guidance for schools that will allow for a full return of our students to daily in-person attendance. Again, please be aware with any new guidance that comes forward we will need time to review, understand and implement any changes. It will also be important to obtain feedback from our stakeholders. Therefore, any new guidance will not be met with an immediate/overnight change. Rather, we will need a period of time to rebuild the remainder of the school year (busing routes, classroom spaces, student schedules, etc.) based upon any new guidance and feedback from our stakeholders.

All of this being said, we understand how important it will be to act as quickly as possible to get our students back to school should this opportunity present itself. We will do so carefully and thoughtfully with the safety of our students, staff and overall school community as our biggest priority.

We are thinking of you. May you have a wonderful upcoming Spring Recess. Be well and be safe.

Sincerely,



Douglas Premo
Superintendent of Schools