



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



June 30, 2021

Dear Colleagues:

Congratulations to you as exemplary leaders of our Connecticut school districts, as well as to our students, staff, families, and all of our education community, for finishing the school year strong after a year filled with challenges and triumphs when asked to balance the COVID-19 pandemic with the priority needs of our students.

One meaningful step that was recently taken by all school districts is the successful posting of the *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plans* to their websites, as required by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) and associated guidance and regulations from the United States Department of Education (USED). The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) wants to acknowledge this substantial step towards fulfilling federal requirements and preparing for our next school year.

We recognize the challenge of completing these *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plans*, as well as planning for the future, because of ongoing questions about health and safety prevention and mitigation strategies. In Connecticut, the health and safety requirements, including for universal masking in school buildings, are currently mandatory in line with executive order. Please consult the [Adapt, Advance, Achieve document and related addenda](#), the [CDC guidance](#), the [Connecticut DPH Order](#), and [CSDE requirements](#).

We are actively working with the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) on the issue of school public health rules and guidance for the fall, with particular attention to the rules for use of masks. An important piece of information we await is updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We are hopeful that the CDC school guidance will be published shortly to further inform CT DPH recommendations and CSDE operational rules for COVID-19 risk reduction in our schools.

We all know we will need to be prepared to make any necessary adjustments to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 risk in schools. Nonetheless, we acknowledge the hard work of our school leaders, students, staff, and community and will continue to assess, and reassess, whether it is appropriate to change the statewide policies related to the COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward to our next Health and Safety Meeting on July 13, 2021, at 8 a.m.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Charlene M. Russell-Tucker".

Charlene M. Russell-Tucker  
Acting Commissioner of Education