



# Genesee and Orleans County School Districts



The Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capital Building  
Albany, NY 12224

February 1, 2022

Dear Governor Hochul,

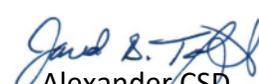
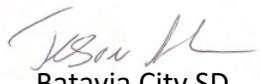
As superintendents of the school districts within the Genesee and Orleans Counties, we respect you for your decisive leadership and willingness to listen to concerns from all stakeholders throughout the state. At the same time, we recognize that good-willed people may not always agree.

This letter is written on behalf of our Genesee and Orleans school communities, which are predominantly rural. Our schools successfully provided in-person learning throughout the 2020-21 school year, supplemented by online learning as needed. A number of our schools remained open full-time. Our plans worked. Despite that reality, for the 2021-22 school year, local control regarding universal masking and COVID testing was removed, and the one-size-fits-all mandates implemented by the state caused unnecessary challenges for us. As the pandemic transitions to become endemic, those unnecessary challenges are becoming more acute.

We are aware that superintendents from the Saratoga Springs region appealed to you and the NYSDOH Commissioner to develop a "Pathway to Normalcy" to identify an exit strategy regarding universal masking. We fully support the idea for the NYSDOH to develop guidance in that regard. However, we believe the pathway should come in the form of guidance that school districts, working closely with their local health departments, can use to develop plans that work best for their respective communities. With that in mind, local control should be fully restored to all school districts in New York State because the needs of each region differ, and we are fully capable of navigating the remainder of the school year with input from our local DOHs, as needed.

**We respectfully request for you and the NYSDOH to develop appropriate guidance for an exit strategy regarding all mitigation measures, but *not* mandates; and we request for local control be fully restored to our school districts to enable us to make decisions appropriate for our individual communities, in consultation with our local DOH.**

Respectfully,

 Albion CSD	 Alexander CSD	 Batavia City SD	 Byron-Bergen CSD	 Elba CSD
 Holley CSD	 Kendall CSD	 LeRoy CSD	 Lyndonville CSD	 Medina CSD
 Oakfield-Alabama CSD	 Pavilion CSD	 Pembroke CSD		