

John V. Dolan
Superintendent of Schools

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June 17, 2021

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Howard Zucker, MD, JD, LLM, Commissioner
New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower, Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Governor Cuomo and Dr. Zucker:

We write on behalf of the East Islip School District Board of Education in support of our neighboring districts that have requested to lift the mask mandate in schools and providing local decision making by allowing us to go mask optional for the remainder of the school year.

We have passed your 70% threshold to return to normal. Adults and students across the state can now engage in a wide variety of activities outside of school without a mask. We have been following your mandates for the last 457 days. While we may not have always agreed, we have supported you.

East Islip has 3,522 students in grades Pre-K-12. We currently have less than 2% of our students on remote instruction. Having less than 2% of our student body on remote instruction is a testament to the trust our community has shown in our district's ability to protect the health and safety of our students and staff. We have had no documented cases in our schools of direct transmission of the virus. Through the collective efforts of our school personnel, families, and entire community, East Islip is a safe and healthy place for our students to go to school.

We ask that you allow school district's that choose to be mask optional for the last week of school be granted permission to do so. We are confident that our students and staff will wear masks when social distancing is not appropriate. This would allow us to begin to prepare for September. If we go a week of mask optional and do not see an uptick in the virus, it will give us the confidence moving toward September.

Once again, we have followed the mandates from the state and applaud your efforts and your team's efforts to keep everyone safe and healthy. We believe it is time for you to trust us as we have trusted you. Allow us to m009TKit