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August 13, 2021

Dear Orange-Ulster BOCES Community,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and good spirits. I am writing to update you on the status of our plan to open our schools and programs to in-person instruction for all students, faculty and staff on September 1st. You may have already heard that the New York State Department of Health will not provide schools with any guidance for September and they have advised us to follow the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) for opening schools. On August 10th the New York State Education Commissioner Dr. Betty Rosa sent a letter to all Superintendents to inform us that the New York State Education Department is in the process of developing a summary guidance document to aid schools and districts as they prepare for the 2021-2022 school year. The document will be based on the CDC and AAP guidance.

We anticipate that the forthcoming guidance will address questions around the wearing of masks, social distancing, remote learning, transportation and community transmission tracking. School districts have been advised by the Governor, State Health Commissioner and the Education Commissioner to work closely with local County Executives and Commissioners of Health to create plans for opening of schools that are consistent and aligned across the region.

This past week the School Superintendents met with County Executive Steve Neuhaus and Dr. Irina Gelman, Orange County Health Commissioner to talk about opening plans and to maintain an open dialogue. We will continue to work with County Officials as we progress toward opening day.

As we receive additional information from the County, State Education Department, Center for Disease Control and American Academy of Pediatrics we will incorporate it into our plan and we will share the full plan with you in the coming weeks. Please look for information on our website that will outline our specific plan for the first day of school. This will be an exciting year for all of us and I am looking forward to welcoming everyone back to school.

Sincerely,

William J. Hecht
Chief Operating Officer