

# Miller Place Union Free School District

7 Memorial Drive, Miller Place, New York 11764-2036

Telephone: (631) 474-2700 Fax: (631) 474-0686

---

## Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Marianne F. Cartisano

## Deputy Superintendent

Seth A. Lipshie

## Assistant Superintendent

Susan G. Craddock

## Executive Director for Educational Services

Sandra A. Wojnowski

## School Business Official

Colleen V. Card

## Board of Education

Johanna Testa, President

Lisa Reitan, Vice President

Keith Frank, Trustee

Bryan Makarius, Trustee

Richard Panico, Trustee

## Via Fax (518) 474-1513 and CM:RR

February 14, 2022

The Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Governor of New York State  
New York State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 11224

Re: Pathway and Metric for COVID-19 Mandate Relief

Dear Governor Hochul,

We would like to express our gratitude for your leadership during these challenging times. Since the beginning of the pandemic, our district has continuously supported the Department of Health's goals to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. We have diligently followed all of the mandates including mask wearing and contact tracing. Proudly, we have been able to maintain in-person learning and keep our schools a safe place for all. We thank you for your recent efforts in supplying over the counter COVID-19 rapid tests to our district during the winter surge. This has enabled us to distribute thousands of these kits to our students, staff and community partners.

Fortunately, we are seeing a rapid decline in cases in our communities. Suffolk County's seven day rolling positivity rate dropped from 27.5 % on January 5 to below 5%. According to recent data, approximately 74% of residents in Suffolk County are fully vaccinated, 84% have received their first dose and 32% have received their booster shots.

Although there may be a new wave or variant in the future, Suffolk County Department of Health Services is well prepared to handle those circumstances. This is largely due to our availability of testing, approved treatments, and previous infection rates with natural immunity. We are in a much better place than in the spring of 2020. We believe now is the time to begin shifting the focus from pandemic planning to endemic planning. We stand ready to assist the State and smoothly transition our educational communities to this new phase. We need to move forward and learn to live safely with the presence of COVID-19 in our world.

In moving forward, we would like to communicate clear metrics to our community for removing masks inside our schools. Providing these specific guidelines, established by health professionals, will allow our community to have attainable goals that look forward to returning to normalcy for our children. When

masks are removed, the district will need revised guidelines on close contacts and quarantines; which now rely heavily on masking and distancing. We ask that when all of this is established, you allow us sufficient time to communicate these changes to our community.

We appreciate your willingness to engage with various educational partners. You have demonstrated on multiple occasions your ability to listen and respond to your constituents' perspectives, and it is for those reasons (in part) that we are writing this letter. We respectfully ask you consider our requests, and together, we can continue to provide a safe teaching and learning environment, for our students and staff.

Respectfully submitted,

*Dr. Marianne F. Cartisano*

Dr. Marianne F. Cartisano  
Superintendent of Schools

*Johanna Testa*

Johanna Testa  
President, Board of Education

*Lisa Reitan*

Lisa Reitan  
Vice President, Board of Education

*Keith Frank*

Keith Frank  
Trustee, Board of Education

*Bryan Makarius*

Bryan Makarius  
Trustee, Board of Education

*Richard Panico*

Richard Panico  
Trustee, Board of Education

Copy: Dr. Mary Bassett, New York State Health Commissioner  
Dr. Betty Rosa, New York State Education Commissioner  
The Honorable Anthony Palumbo, New York State Senate  
The Honorable Jodi Giglio, New York State Assembly Honorable  
Mr. Steve Bellone, Suffolk County Executive  
Dr. Gregson Piggot, Commissioner SCDH