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WILLIAM C. CONRAD, III
Assemblymember 140th District
Erie County, Niagara County

November 24, 2021

Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor, State of New York
Executive Chamber
The Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Support for test-to-stay policy in schools

Dear Governor Hochul:

I am writing to advocate for the statewide implementation of, and for the financial and technical support for a test-to-stay, or TTS program for our schools. I have heard from district superintendents across Western New York who support the measure and present a most compelling case for TTS and its benefits to students' health and education.

The Erie-Niagara School Superintendents Association recently conducted a survey of 30 districts in the region. Between September 1 and October 14, 2,500 students were subject to mandatory quarantines – and fewer than 2% of those students tested positive for COVID-19 during their quarantine periods.

Data have shown that the spread of COVID-19 in schools is minimal. Our leaders in education have complied with every regulation meant to curtail infection, with their number-one goal being to keep children in school. TTS would afford districts the ability to use negative test results as a means of expeditiously returning close-contact cases to the classroom, eliminating unneeded student absences and supporting children's continued catchup from a year that forced so much disruption, not only to their learning but to their overall well-being.

To be clear, I support immunization against this pandemic, and I understand that vaccines are the key to our collective recovery from it. However, as some children are ineligible for the shots, and with some families still awaiting guidance from their pediatricians, I believe districts ought to have a TTS policy at their disposal.

Our young people belong in school. It would be detrimental to inflict upon them more upheaval, and to hinder their access to the many resources schools provide, by continuing to mandate quarantines that – according to the evidence – are largely unnecessary.

I thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

William C. Conrad III
New York State Assemblymember, 140th District

Cc: Erie-Niagara School Superintendents Association
Buffalo Public Schools Superintendent Kriner Cash
Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Schools Superintendent Sabatino Cimato
North Tonawanda City Schools Superintendent Greg Woytila
Sweet Home Schools Superintendent Mike Ginestre
Tonawanda City Schools Superintendent Tim Oldenburg