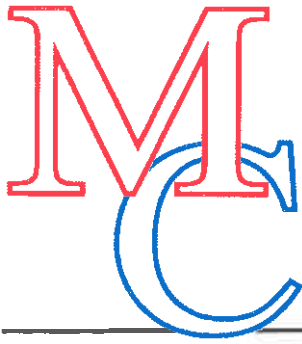


MIDDLE COUNTRY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



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Roberta A. Gerold, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
Francine McMahon, Deputy Superintendent for Instruction
Beth Rella, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent for Business
James G. Donovan, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

November 10, 2021

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

Dear Governor Hochul,

We would like to thank you for your commitment to New York State as we continue to navigate through these unprecedented times. Your very clear intent to keep our schools open was most welcomed as we share your belief that students learn best when they are in person.

The Middle Country Central School District serves about 9300 students, pre-k through grade 12. From the start of school a year ago this September, we followed re-opening guidelines very carefully, paying special attention to masking, social distancing and contact tracing, to help ensure that our schools remained safe – and open. As we shared in our July 29, 2021, letter to the Governor’s office, our students and our staff have been safe in our schools. We have seen almost no spread of the virus in our schools, even with the reduced social distancing that we now have in place.

As we enter week ten of the 2021-2022 school year, we ask that you work with our local health department to provide us with clear data about how the universal mask mandate is faring in Suffolk County schools. To date, there appears to be negligible instances of classroom spread throughout Suffolk County. We also would like to know specifically what metrics we need to achieve so that we can take the next steps in returning safely to a more “normal” instructional setting, including a careful transition to the optional wearing of masks.

We would also like to express our concerns about recent conversations mandating the COVID-19 vaccination for children. The addition of the COVID-19 vaccine to the New York State required vaccination schedule for school attendance will cause many families to make difficult decisions about their children’s education. It is completely understandable that parents/guardians will be hesitant to give a newly approved vaccine to their children. We believe that the decision to vaccinate children should remain a choice.

The health and well-being of our students, faculty, staff and community members is our priority. The Middle Country Central School District has carefully followed the protocol that has been set forth by both the New York State Department of Health and the Suffolk County Department of Health. Our track record is tried and

The mission of the MCCSD is to empower and inspire all students to apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to be creative problem solvers, to achieve personal success, and to contribute responsibly in a diverse and dynamic world.

proven and has been successful in mitigating the transmission of COVID-19 within our schools both before and after vaccines.

Thank you for your consideration of these matters. We look forward to working cooperatively with you in the coming months to ensure the continuing safety of our students and staff.

Sincerely,



Karen J. Lessler, Ed.D.
Board of Education President



Dawn Sharrock
Board of Education 2nd Vice President
Chair of the Middle Country
Legislative/Community Outreach Committee



Roberta A. Gerold, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

cc:

Dr. Howard Zucker, Commissioner, New York State Department of Health

Steve Bellone, Suffolk County Executive

Dr. Gregson H. Pigott Commissioner, Suffolk County Department of Health Services

Dr. Rochelle Walensky, Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., Director, NIAID Office of Communications and Government Relations