



**BEACON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES**

10 Education Drive
Beacon, New York 12508
845-838-6900 phone
845-838-6905 fax

Ms. Meredith Heuer
President

Ms. Elissa Betterbid
Vice President

Beacon City School District
Board of Education

December 18, 2020

Assembly Member Jonathan Jacobson
Legislative Office Building 628
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Assembly Member Jacobson:

It has become undeniable that keeping schools open is what is best for students, especially our most vulnerable populations.

Achieving a safe and secure environment for students and staff is a costly and time-consuming endeavor. Our district has taken on this responsibility with all seriousness and has spent, to date, \$274,000 to provide the necessary supplies and protocols that have, so far, proven effective. This outlay of funds has come with no financial support or reimbursement from the state or local level. In fact, we have managed to achieve this while our state aid has been withheld and threats of significant cuts loom.

As cases rise in our area, we support testing as a measure to keep our schools safely open. However, testing without administrative and financial support from the state is a burden that our district is unable to bear. It is clear that the pandemic has increased the education equity gap, as poorer districts are forced to keep their doors closed, while wealthier districts can afford the additional costs.

It is unsustainable for most school districts to be responsible for COVID testing, in addition to their current work of educating and caring for students during the pandemic.

We call on NYS legislators to ensure that public school districts in designated micro-clusters are provided with the logistical and financial support to ensure sufficient random COVID testing of students and staff to keep school buildings open for in-person learning.

Respectfully,

Meredith Heuer

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President



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Senator Sue Serino
188 State Street Legislative Office Building
Room 613
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Senator Serino:

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Achieving a safe and secure environment for students and staff is a costly and time-consuming endeavor. Our district has taken on this responsibility with all seriousness and has spent, to date, \$274,000 to provide the necessary supplies and protocols that have, so far, proven effective. This outlay of funds has come with no financial support or reimbursement from the state or local level. In fact, we have managed to achieve this while our state aid has been withheld and threats of significant cuts loom.

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Albany, New York 12248

Dear Assembly Member Jacobson:

The below signed school district fully support Assembly Bill A3648A, which mandates “a culturally responsive education curriculum and standards” for all grade levels, and proposes \$25 million to fund the mandate across the state. New York State represents an incredibly diverse student population, with approximately 57% of students identifying as non-Caucasian or multiracial. As we realize more fully the impact of systemic inequality, it is important to ensure that all students are guaranteed the best possible public education in a school environment that is supportive of them.

A culturally responsive approach to education can achieve this, incorporating professional development, more inclusive curricula, and updated learning materials. These initiatives require funding. Assembly Bill A3648A would not only mandate a more culturally responsive curriculum, but would also help fund it, providing much-needed support as district budgets continue to shrink. This would have a direct and positive impact on the depth and breadth of learning at every level, while building deeper understanding and empathy between students and staff.

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The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12234

Dear Governor Cuomo:

It has become undeniable that keeping schools open is what is best for students, especially our most vulnerable populations.

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Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

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