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**For Immediate Release: Thursday, August 12, 2021**

### **Letter to Cayuga County School District Superintendents**

Attached is a letter that was sent late afternoon to Cayuga County School District Superintendents on Wednesday, August 11, 2021 regarding recommendations for the reopening of schools for the 2021-2022 school year.

These recommendations were made by the Cayuga County Chairperson and the Public Health Director in consultation with Cayuga County Medical Director and Cayuga County Board of Health physicians with the end goal of keeping students in the classroom for in person learning with everyone's safety being a priority.

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## County of Cayuga

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**Aileen M. McNabb-Coleman**

Chair Cayuga County Legislature

160 Genesee St.

Auburn, NY 13021

August 11, 2021

Dear Cayuga County School District Superintendents:

The COVID-19 pandemic continues and its impact is on-going. As the school year approaches, we support the goal of bringing our students into the classroom for in person learning in a safe manner based upon scientific facts as known to us and keeping in mind the ever changing nature of this virus.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Public Health Association and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend for the 2021-2022 school year, all kindergarten through grade 12 schools adopt universal masking for all school teachers, staff, students, transportation vendors and visitors regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status. The CDC provides additional guidance for higher risk sports and activities. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>

Locally we, the Cayuga County Chairperson and Public Health Director, in consultation with our Medical Director and Board of Health physicians, recommend the preventive guidance detailed by CDC which includes a multi-layered approach to prevention. The multi-layered approach includes: vaccination, indoor masking, screening and testing, ventilation, handwashing, respiratory etiquette, staying home when ill and getting tested, contact tracing in conjunction with isolation and quarantine, cleaning and disinfection of school environment.

Key Prevention Strategies to diminish COVID-19 infection in school settings:

1. Do not allow any symptomatic people into school or on school transportation. This applies to adults and children. Even mild symptoms that mimic allergies are found to be indicators of COVID-19 infection.
2. Get vaccinated. Vaccination is effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalizations and death.
3. For masking to be effective, masks need to be worn correctly and consistently. Wearing face coverings properly reduces the amount of virus that a positive person may transmit and protects others from being exposed to that virus. In addition, wearing face coverings will reduce the number of students who would need to be placed in quarantine (stay at

home), if a classmate is positive for COVID, ultimately keeping students in the classroom.

We are continuously learning more about COVID-19 variants and their impact, therefore we will continue to follow factual information and guidance regarding prevention and reduction of infection of the virus.

The health and well-being of our community remains our priority. We appreciate the excellent communication and partnership we have with you all as together we serve our students and community.

Sincerely,



Aileen McNabb-Coleman

Chair Cayuga County Legislature



Kathleen D. Cuddy MPH

Public Health Director, Cayuga County