



For Immediate Release:

School mask requirements remain unchanged at this time
Capital Region BOCES districts will leave protocols unchanged until state guidance is received

Albany, N.Y. (June 6, 2021) – On Friday afternoon, New York State Health Commissioner Howard Zucker issued a letter informing the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that New York would ease the mask requirements in schools as early as Monday, June 7. The school superintendents in the 24 districts that comprise the Capital Region BOCES region have reviewed this letter; however, at this time public schools have received no definite guidance from the state.

As a region, the districts will make no change to mask policies until such guidance is received. Mask wearing will continue in accordance with school district Reopening Plans that were developed based on the comprehensive state guidance of last summer.

“Our school districts take the health and safety of our students and staff very seriously. Just as we have done throughout the pandemic, we won’t make COVID protocol decisions without guidance from the state health department,” said Capital Region BOCES District Superintendent Anita Murphy. “We won’t make any changes to our protocols, including mask wearing, until we’ve had time to receive guidance and discuss any changes with our local health officials, boards of education and communities.”

District mask policies in the Capital Region include requirements for mask use on school buses, in classrooms, in school hallways and on playgrounds. Students regularly take mask breaks through the school day, which include during time of physical exertions.

“School leaders recognize that especially as the weather warms up more mask breaks under the appropriate conditions may be needed. This is why wearing masks is just one of the health and safety protocols that our schools have had in place since we reopened in September,” Murphy said.

Districts in the Capital Region BOCES region include Albany City, Berne-Knox-Westerlo, Bethlehem, Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake, Cobleskill-Richmondville, Cohoes City, Duanesburg, Green Island, Guilderland, Menands, Middleburgh, Mohonasen, Niskayuna, North Colonie, Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk, Schalmont, Schenectady City, Schoharie, Scotia-Glenville, Sharon Springs, Shenendehowa, South Colonie, Voorheesville and Watervliet City.

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The Capital Region Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) is the sixth-largest BOCES in New York state, and delivers more than 300 educational and administrative services to its 24 component school districts. Combined, these districts educate more than 80,000 students in the Albany, Schoharie, Schenectady and Saratoga counties of New York state. In addition, Capital Region BOCES provides several services to more than 150 school districts outside of the Capital Region. For more information, visit <https://www.capitalregionboces.org>.