



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo: For now, opt-out for in-person learning must exist

Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.

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Governor Cuomo recently made the decision that schools can open across the state for in-person learning, however, State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., a member of the Senate Education Committee, wants to make sure that parents and teachers still have the choice to safely opt in to either a blended learning plan or an all-home learning situation at their discretion.

This detailed plan provided by both the state and city includes strict guidelines for school activities such as transportation, pick up and dismissal times, in-person and remote learning, meals, PPE requirements for students, faculty and staff, and many more aspects that go into safely operating a school.

Each school — including religious and independent schools — must submit their individual reopening plans to the NYS Education Department.

“The main issue here is safety. As an elected official, but also as a concerned parent of two children in the city’s system, I believe ensuring the safety of our students, teachers and staff is of critical importance,” Addabbo said. “Proper COVID-19 safety protocols including temperature scans, face coverings, social distancing where appropriate, daily cleanings, and proper contact tracing will go a long way in making sure that our schools are safe for everyone. With clear and transparent communication, we must stay on top of every school to make sure they are following the guidelines put forth and according to their individual reopening plans. I know many feel that the classroom learning experience is best for our students, but at this point, what is best is the health and safety of all. ”

According to the city’s plan, students and staff will randomly be given temperature screenings each day before entering the school building. They will also be required to conduct at-home temperature checks. All school staff members will undergo COVID-19 testing on a rolling basis once school is in session.

If a person does have a case of COVID-19, all students and teachers in that class must quarantine for 14 days.

“I understand the questions and concerns students and parents, as well as teachers and faculty, have about a return to in-class learning. I have those same concerns as well,” Addabbo added. “I am happy to see that there will be no restrictions on students and staff being able to opt into a blended learning approach or even full at-home learning. This fluid situation can change very quickly if confirmed cases begin to rise. If everyone follows the strict guidelines issued by the city and the state, I believe we have a better chance of having a successful 2020-2021 academic year.”

The New York City Department of Education district reopening plan can be found here: <https://cdn-blob-prd.azureedge.net/prd-pws/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2020-nycdoe-reopeningplan.pdf>