



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

Senator Gallivan Calls on Department of Health to Adopt New CDC Guidelines for Schools

JIM RANNEY March 23, 2021

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Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma) is urging the New York State Department of Health to adopt new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which recommends 3 feet social distancing for students attending school. State guidelines currently require 6 feet of distance between students, meaning many schools are not able to re-open or must limit the number of students allowed in school.

Senator Gallivan says implementing the new guidelines would give school leaders more options and would allow some schools to re-open for in-person instruction.

"The Department of Health should follow the recommendation of the CDC and give school superintendents and school boards the ability to make a decision based on the situation in their school and their community," Senator Gallivan said. "The new CDC guidance would mean the number of students allowed in school could double."

Senator Gallivan wrote a letter to Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker, asking him to revise the state's rules pertaining to social distancing in schools. Late last month, Dr. Zucker told members of the Legislature that he was reviewing the six-foot guidance and would make an announcement soon.

"Despite the best efforts of teachers and parents, too many students are struggling academically and socially because of remote learning. Adopting the recommendations of the CDC would allow schools to re-open while maintaining other safety protocols such as masks and hand washing," Gallivan said.

The CDC on Friday released three new studies that it says support 3 feet distance between students as long as everyone wears a mask.