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**THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK**



**JEN METZGER  
SENATOR, 42<sup>ND</sup> DISTRICT**

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April 27, 2020

Ms. Shannon Tahoe  
Interim Commissioner of Education  
NYS Education Department  
NYS Education Building  
89 Washington Avenue  
Albany, New York 12234

Dear Interim Commissioner Tahoe:

We would like to thank you, the Board of Regents, and the staff of the New York State Education Department for your efforts to ensure that New York's children continue learning during this unprecedented public health emergency.

We are writing to encourage the New York State Education Department and the New York State Board of Regents to provide guidance to local school districts regarding Graduation Ceremony alternatives for the Class of 2020. As you know, school closures have been necessary to safeguard the health of our children, teachers, staff, and families, and slow the spread of COVID-19. Given the possibility that New York's students will not return to school prior to the end of the school year, we believe that it would be prudent to provide public schools with guidance now to enable adequate planning and preparation.

High school graduation is a significant and important milestone for students and their families. Not only does it provide recognition for years of hard work; it also signifies the passage from one stage of life to another, whether college, work, or military service. With their senior year upended, it is particularly important that we think creatively to provide students in the Class of 2020 with the recognition and celebratory moment they deserve.

With this objective in mind, we wanted to bring to your attention a suggestion from a local school administrator, Goshen High School Assistant Principal Kyle Roddey, for your consideration. Mr. Roddey proposes allowing graduation ceremonies to take place in venues such as drive-in theaters. The use of this type of venue would meet social distancing requirements, with family members from the same household restricted to their vehicles. While a drive-in theater is optimal due to the existing audio and video infrastructure, districts may have other creative solutions to enable a "drive-in" graduation.

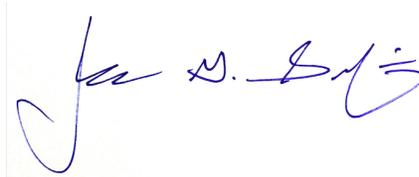
Interim Commissioner Tahoe  
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We attach, for your consideration, the proposal outlined by Mr. Roddey. We urge that the State Education Department and the State Board of Regents give consideration to this and other creative solutions to ensure that New York's High School Class of 2020 is able to participate in this most significant milestone in their young lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jen Metzger". The signature is stylized with a large initial "J" and a cursive "Metzger".

Senator Jen Metzger  
NYS Senate, 42nd District

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James Skoufis". The signature is stylized with a large initial "J" and a cursive "Skoufis".

Senator James Skoufis  
NYS Senate, 39th District

Enc.