

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



SUSAN SERINO
41ST District

ALBANY OFFICE
ROOM 613
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247
(518) 455-2945
HYDE PARK OFFICE
4254 ALBANY POST ROAD
HYDE PARK, NEW YORK 12538
(845) 229-0106
PUTNAM OFFICE
117 TOWN PARK LANE
PUTNAM VALLEY, NEW YORK 10579
(845) 528-0417

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

AGING
SOCIAL SERVICES

COMMITTEE MEMBER

CHILDREN & FAMILIES
INSURANCE

MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

August 19, 2020

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

As New York's schools prepare to reopen less than a month from today, I remain resolute that districts be equipped to reopen in a safe and effective manner. Parents are faced with the impossible choice of being able to return to work or continuing to stay home with their children. Teachers and administrators worry whether more can be done to secure the health and safety of everyone in the building. School facility staff hope to maintain an environment that prevents any spread of the virus, and children seek a safe return to the classroom where they can resume learning.

In order to facilitate this safe return, it is crucial that schools receive proper levels of personal protective equipment (PPE), including masks and gloves, to protect the students they're charged to serve. Yet these items cost money, and school districts are already constrained by a flat Foundation Aid formula, threats of future State aid cuts, and an array of other future uncertainties. One of the best ways the State can step up to help at this time is through PPE purchases. As New York stepped forward to ensure schools and local governments were supplied with hand sanitizer this past spring, it must now step forward to ensure schools are properly supplied with sufficient PPE. We can and should do this using available CARES Act funding.

The July Update to the State Financial Plan that was released by your Division of the Budget last week contained a breakdown of how the State is planning to spend funds given to New York through the Federal CARES Act. This breakdown included almost \$1 billion in planned spending from July 1st to December 31st in a category labeled "other." I can think of no "other" purpose at this time more important than protecting New York's children and teachers. I respectfully request that the State uses this funding immediately to purchase and distribute PPE to schools throughout the State to help ensure that our students, teachers, and all school staff are as safe and prepared as possible in this challenging new school year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sue Serino".

Senator Sue Serino
41st District