



July 24, 2020

Dear Parents,

Last week, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) released [Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools](#) to help schools and school districts as they plan to reopen, whether that occurs in person, remotely, or in a combination of the two. The guidance encourages community involvement and allows for flexibility so that districts and schools in every corner of the state can assess their unique situations and develop plans that best meet the needs of their students. The guidance document and an FAQ document are available on NYSED's [Reopening Schools web page](#).

Also last week, the Board of Regents [adopted a fourth series of emergency regulations](#) that afford essential flexibility for educators, students, and professionals to address issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board adopted the [first series of emergency regulations](#) at its April 2020 meeting, the [second series of emergency regulations](#) at its May 2020 meeting, and the [third series of emergency regulations](#) at its June 2020 meeting.

The monumental challenges brought about by the pandemic are like nothing our state has ever confronted. Educators and professionals have faced innumerable complex problems over the last several months, and the emergency regulations will help ensure that work can continue across the state to execute a responsible, coordinated response to COVID-19. [A full summary of the fourth series of amendments is available in last week's news release](#).

The coordinated response to COVID-19 includes addressing the immense fiscal and emotional costs of the pandemic. This week, NYSED released information on the application process for local educational agencies (LEAs) to apply for \$1.2 billion in [Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act funding](#). The CARES Act provides \$30.75 billion nationwide in an Education Stabilization Fund to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus. We will work with New York's LEAs to process applications for CARES Act funding as quickly as possible to expedite these funds that are crucial to ensure that students are supported academically and emotionally in the wake of this pandemic.

I am also pleased to share good news this week that NYSED named the third class of [My Brother's Keeper \(MBK\) Fellows](#) who have been identified as leaders in their MBK Communities and who will be provided with mentor relationship opportunities in government, education, and business. The 71 Fellows, all high school juniors, represent 24 New York State school districts.

I am proud to welcome the 2020 MBK Fellows who join a remarkable group of young men that are learning to inspire change in their communities. I thank Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie and his colleagues for their continued support of New York's MBK Program and their commitment to advancing measures that create opportunities for success for all New Yorkers.

Finally, I know it can be especially challenging to keep your children engaged in learning during the summer months. If you're looking for summer learning ideas, consider participating in the [2020 Summer Reading at New York Libraries program](#), check out the [NYS Museum's Online Resources and Activities Portal](#), and follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#) for daily tips, resources, and activities.

I appreciate your continued support. Please encourage other parents to sign up for our [parent email list](#) so we can all stay connected as we look ahead to the future.

Sincerely,

Shannon Tahoe
Interim Commissioner

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