



May 22, 2020

Dear Parents,

The Novel Coronavirus has impacted all of us in unprecedented ways. The immense fiscal and emotional costs of the pandemic are like nothing our school communities have ever confronted. As a result, New York schools urgently need additional resources to recover from this emergency. Last week, Board of Regents Chancellor Betty A. Rosa and I sent [letters to U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos advocating for federal funding](#) for elementary and secondary schools and institutions of higher learning. The letters detail numerous critical areas in which federal funding is needed for school and district recovery, as well as the needs of New York's colleges and universities.

As we look to re-opening schools in our new reality, we need to ensure that students are supported academically and emotionally in the wake of this pandemic. The federal funding that we have requested from Secretary DeVos is also critical in a rapidly changing landscape to provide support for our colleges and universities and to ensure the continuation of important public broadcasting stations, museums, and libraries. We cannot hope to rebuild and move on safely and appropriately from this catastrophe without the additional federal funding we have requested.

Despite all of the challenges, New York's educators have persevered. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) is highlighting the exceptional dedication of New York's educators with inspiring examples of emotional support, equitable solutions, and instructional practices that are being used to stay connected with students while schools are closed. You can visit our [Staying Connected web page](#) to see some of the stories. In addition to posting the stories on our website, we are spotlighting the stories with the hashtags #StayingConnected and #EducatorsAreHeroes on our social media channels ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#)). You can also [sign up for our Staying Connected newsletter](#) for weekly stories delivered right to your inbox.

Even though parenting, working, and life in general have also changed significantly, I know you have also been working extremely hard to keep your children engaged in education. I want you to know that I recognize your efforts and appreciate all you are doing! Please refer to the following resources that are available to support you:

- NYSED's [Continuity of Learning web page](#) featuring remote learning resources
- [Expanded educational resources and "Learn-at-Home" programming](#) from New York's nine public television stations
- #NYLearnsRemotely campaign on NYSED's social media channels featuring high-quality resources, guidance, tips, and activities that can all be used to help facilitate learning at home
- [New York State Museum online education portal](#)
- [New York State Museum virtual field trips](#)
- NYSED's [dedicated coronavirus web page](#)
- NYSED's [news page](#)
- NYSED's social media channels ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#))

Finally, I know that this is an especially difficult time for high school seniors and their families. I have been thinking about all of you, and I'm so proud of the hard work and commitment that high school seniors have exhibited in order to finish out their senior year--especially in the face of the hardships we've seen over the last few months. Last weekend, a national celebration called [Graduate Together](#) aired on major television networks and social media channels. During the broadcast, New York's high school seniors were invited to [watch a congratulatory message](#) from me and read stories highlighting the resiliency and strength of students, teachers, and schools amid the pandemic. NYSED will continue to share these stories through the end of the school year. Our [Graduation 2020 web page](#) highlights some of the many ways that students, teachers, and schools are coming together to honor the Class of 2020 in New York State. More examples are being added each week. [Check out these wonderful Class of 2020 stories!](#)

I hope you are able to spend some time outside with your family this weekend (while observing social distancing guidelines, of course). Please stay well.

Sincerely,

Shannon Tahoe
Interim Commissioner