



June 23, 2020

Dear Governor Cuomo,

We are the Board of Education of the Sachem Central School District, of one of the largest suburban school districts in the State of New York. We write as a body, unified in our request that you reconsider the present size restrictions for high school graduation ceremonies, and permit alternatives that would allow for safe, well regulated, socially distanced and appropriately supervised "person" graduation ceremonies that a district of our size could reasonably implement. We feel that our requested accommodation would pose no greater risk to public health than the relaxation of restrictions already permitted in other areas.

As you are aware, the COVID pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for school districts across the state. We have seen firsthand the impact that the need to close schools for in-person instruction has had on our student population. Our school community has worked tirelessly to provide educational, social and emotional support to our student body while remaining in compliance with your Executive Orders. We have been diligent in our efforts to do our part to support the statewide effort to flatten the curve and help reduce the impact of the COVID contagion in our community.

While there is no substitute for in-person instruction, our administrators, teachers and staff have made tremendous efforts under incredibly difficult circumstances to provide the best services they could to our students through remote instruction. While we are constantly amazed by the efforts and resilience of our student body, we are acutely aware of the toll this crisis has taken on them. At all grade levels our children have missed so many opportunities for interaction with their school community. A graduation ceremony is their final chance to be honored and to celebrate all that they have earned and accomplished. It is a day that families in our school district and across this great nation cherish.

As a Board of Education, the safety and security of our student body is our foremost responsibility. We would never do or allow anything that we believe would create a heightened risk of harm for our students. We know that you feel the same way. But we also remain steadfast in our belief that we have the capacity to host safe, well regulated, socially distanced and appropriately supervised "person" graduation ceremonies in compliance with CDC guidelines for social distancing and non-contact, without being subject to the present size restrictions set forth in your Executive Orders. To comply with the restrictions as they exist, a district of our size

