

Andrew Pallotta
President

Jolene T. DiBrango
Executive Vice President

Ronald Gross
Second Vice President

J. Philippe Abraham
Secretary-Treasurer

NYSUT Board Resolution

Reopening Schools Responsibly

Whereas, educators and school staff know the best way for students to connect, learn and thrive is in person, in school; and

Whereas, in this unprecedented time as we combat a global health pandemic, the well-being and learning of our children is of critical importance, and the safety of staff and students must be paramount; and

Whereas, educators, like parents, want a science-based plan that prevents schools from becoming the spreaders of COVID-19; and

Whereas, the well-being and learning of our children – in person – as vital as that is, cannot be achieved until we ensure that school buildings only open in accordance with the latest scientific knowledge and health guidelines on how to ensure safety; be it therefore

RESOLVED, NYSUT will continue to advocate for strong, unambiguous, science-based safety guidance and re-opening metrics from the State that include:

1. The average daily community infection rate among those tested for COVID-19 is below 5 percent.
2. Effective rapid testing, contact tracing, daily screening and isolation in every region.
3. Staff who are in a COVID-19 high risk category have access to special accommodations or workplace adjustments including the ability to work remotely.
4. An authority empowered to trigger building and/or district closure in the event of a positive case or cases in a school and/or a regional spike in infection rates or when public health standards aren't being met.
5. The district and school developing and funding proper safeguards and practices to protect health and safety, including social distancing of 6 feet,

face coverings to be worn by students and staff, access to well-stocked hand-washing facilities, resources and staffing to adequately clean and sanitize facilities and buses and necessary updates to ventilation and building systems.

6. Develop a rolling testing regimen in every school community for adults and student volunteers to identify those infected with the virus but asymptomatic.

RESOLVED, NYSUT will continue to compile health and safety resources to enable our locals to advocate within their districts, instructional resources to enable our locals to advocate and inform decision-making at the local level, and conduct periodic tele-townhalls to further inform on these resources; and

RESOLVED, NYSUT will continue using the news media, digital advertising and social media outreach to push back against those that refuse to adopt safe and responsible reopening plans; and

RESOLVED, NYSUT Field staff will continue to assist our locals in negotiating plans, working conditions and accommodations for vulnerable populations; and

RESOLVED, NYSUT will continue to advocate for funding at the federal and state level to ensure safety measures and positions, such as school nurses, are funded, and for childcare resources for our members who will return to in-person instruction; and

RESOLVED, NYSUT will continue to advocate for reliable and incontrovertible contact tracing and isolation protocols where there is a positive case in a school, including immediately moving to virtual learning for 14 days whenever there is a positive case in a school; and

RESOLVED, NYSUT will prepare a litigation strategy and process for enforcement when safety violations occur; and

RESOLVED, NYSUT is recommending and will support locals engaging in protests and other activism should the conditions in their workplaces be irresponsible and unsafe; and

RESOLVED, NYSUT will continue to bring all necessary resources to bear, including providing information and tools, supporting affiliates in legal matters, and

working with and educating other stakeholders, in advocacy for safe reopening plans – from the bargaining table, in Albany, NY and Washington, DC and in the courtroom – with the goal of securing safe conditions for all students, faculty and staff; and

RESOLVED, that in the fight to ensure the safety and health of NYSUT members, our students and our communities, we will use every action and tool available to us.