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A. Joseph Dhara, Superintendent of Schools

Dear Berlin Parents/Guardians and Staff,

After meeting this Sunday morning (June 6th) with regional superintendents from all 3 RCG counties and county Department of Health officials, the District will be implementing temporary mask adjustments in anticipation of the expected heat and humidity tomorrow and of additional guidance from the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH).

On Monday, we will provide teachers and staff with the discretion to extend mask breaks in class **while students are seated**. Mask wearing can be relaxed outside during recess and physical education while following all other COVID-19 mitigation protocols.

Please continue to follow all COVID-19 mitigation protocols, including social distancing, handwashing, and the wearing of masks on buses as these have worked throughout the school year and have allowed us to maintain our schools and offices open.

Our district is aware of the letter that Dr. Zucker sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky last Friday (June 4th) regarding new COVID-19 guidance for the wearing of masks in schools across NYS. While Dr. Zucker's intent has already been publicized in various media outlets; these changes have not been formally communicated to school districts.

Over the weekend, we received an email from the New York State Education Department clarifying that the intent of this letter from Dr. Zucker was to obtain a response from the CDC regarding differing standards for summer camps and schools; it has not changed any existing arrangements.

According to Nysed (as of June 6th), " According to conversations with Executive staff, the intent of this letter was to obtain a response from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) regarding differing standards for summer camps and schools; it has not changed any existing arrangements. **Therefore, schools should continue to operate under their existing procedures until further notice**. No changes have been, or will be, made by the Executive until after Monday June 7 to afford the CDC an opportunity to respond to the letter."

At this time, we are awaiting official guidance from the New York State Department of Health or the State Education Department on mask changes. This is expected on Monday. The school district will review and evaluate the guidance before considering or making any changes to its COVID-19 mask protocols.

The health and safety of our students and staff remains our top priority as we prepare to finish one school year and plan for another. We thank you for your patience as we await formal guidance that will allow us to make any permanent changes to the mask protocols.

Thank you,  
Joseph Dhara  
Superintendent of Schools  
Berlin Central School District