



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

SERINO TO STATE: RELEASE FUNDING FOR PPE IN SCHOOLS

SUSAN SERINO August 19, 2020

| ISSUE: **BACK TO SCHOOL, EDUCATION, TEACHERS, COMBATING COVID-19 AND PROTECTING NEW YORKERS**

ALBANY, NY – In an open letter to Governor Andrew Cuomo, Senator Sue Serino today is urging the state to utilize unused CARES Act funding to immediately purchase and distribute personal protective equipment (PPE) to New York schools to help ensure that our students and teachers are as safe as possible in this challenging new school year.

“School districts and parents are facing agonizing decisions as they work to safely get students back to school,” said Senator Sue Serino. “The last thing they need to worry about is how they will afford PPE or where they will safely procure it from. The state must act swiftly and do everything it can to deliver the necessary PPE—and any additional health and safety resources—directly to school districts across the state, and that starts with using the funding we know the state has available through the CARES Act.”

In order to facilitate a safe return, it is crucial that schools receive proper levels of PPE, including masks and gloves, to protect the students they’re charged to serve. Yet these items cost money, and school districts are already constrained by a flat Foundation Aid formula, threats of future State aid cuts, and an array of other future uncertainties. Serino argues that this critical need justifies the immediate use of this available funding.

In the letter, Serino points out that the July Update to the State Financial Plan that was released by the State Division of the Budget last week contained a breakdown of how the State is planning to spend funds given to New York through the Federal CARES Act. That

breakdown included almost \$1 billion in planned spending from July 1st to December 31st in a category labeled “other.” Serino argues that there is no “other” purpose at this time more important than protecting New York’s children and teachers.

Serino continued saying, “Despite the efforts of my colleagues and I to return power to the Legislature, the power to allocate this funding still rests solely with the Governor. If schools are to reopen, everyone in the building must be safe, and that starts with ensuring districts have access to the critical PPE they will depend on. I am urging the Governor to do what is right and order these funds be utilized immediately to help schools meet this critical need.”

To view Serino’s letter in full, [click here](#).