



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

Senator Helming Calls for 5-Day School Reopening

PAMELA HELMING February 20, 2021

In his Friday briefing, Governor Cuomo said he wants to see schools reopen to in-class learning as soon as possible, and asked, “If the school doesn’t have an infection spike, and if the school is safer than the surrounding community, then why isn’t the school open five days a week?”

Senator Helming has been advocating for five-day school reopening, but said the state needs to amend its guidance to give local school districts the ability to reopen. She said:

“The Governor can’t simply suggest schools should open five days a week and leave families hanging on in anticipation. He can’t place the responsibility on local governments, who he told to be more aggressive on this.

If the Governor wants schools to reopen five days a week, then the state needs to amend the guidance that is preventing districts – particularly larger districts – from doing so. The six foot distancing requirement would need to be changed. And bus seating restrictions.

The majority of school superintendents I’ve spoken with want to return to in-person learning five days a week, and they can do it safely.

Schools are safe. Kids belong in school. Their lives and their families’ lives have been severely disrupted by the pandemic. Working parents have taken on second jobs as teachers. Some –

moms disproportionately – have left the workforce to stay home with their children.

If we want to help students and families, if we want to get the economy moving again, amend the guidance and help schools safely reopen.”