



Board of Education

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June 19, 2024

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul:

The Board of Education of the Wappingers Central School District strenuously encourages you to veto the so called “Heat Index Bill” (S.3397 and A.9011).

While our Board of Education recognizes that this bill is well intentioned, you should veto the bill for the following reasons:

- The bill assumes that technology is in place to monitor the temperature of individual classrooms and take action when the temperature reaches 82 degrees. Uniform monitoring systems are not in place in all school buildings, many of which are more than 50 years old. For example, in the Wappingers Central School District, the ninth largest school district in New York State with a student population of approximately 10,500, the construction on our newest school began in 1968.
- The bill assumes that there is adequate classroom space available to relocate students and continue meaningful instruction on extreme heat days. The availability of “extra” space within New York State school buildings is minimal.
- The logistics of safely relocating or releasing students to assure consistently implementing the return home in a safe manner on school buses that are not equipped with air conditioning will present a challenge to many school districts, including the Wappingers Central School District, which operates that largest district owned and operated bus fleet in New York State.
- The bill assumes that school buildings in New York are able to be temperature controlled in a meaningful way. For an overwhelming majority of classrooms, this is not the case.

Unless legislation is first passed to fully fund the means to mitigate extreme heat in New York schools, this bill must be vetoed.

Please have a member(s) of your staff contact our Superintendent, Dr. Dwight Bonk (dwight.bonk@wcsdny.org), for additional details in advance of your response to our letter.

As a Board of Education, we are concerned that this bill will lead to either an interruption of learning or, in September and June, the resumption of “remote learning” due to minimum attendance requirements. Our Board of Education is strongly in favor of in person learning for our students.

Sincerely,

John Lumia, President
Board of Education

cc: Board of Education
Dr. Dwight Bonk, Superintendent of Schools