Board of Education

NORA H. JOHNSON
President

ELIZABETH WEISBURD
Vice President

December 18, 2019

Senator Anna M. Kaplan
New York State Senator
1 Old Country Road, Suite 270
Carle Place, New York 11514

Dear Senator Kaplan:

Proposed legislation to amend section 2164 of the Public Health Law currently exists in both the NYS Assembly and NYS Senate. The proposed amendments would mandate immunization against the human papillomavirus (HPV) and Influenza in order for students to attend public school. This letter is to inform you that the Superintendent and Board of Education of the Port Washington Union Free School District strongly oppose these proposed amendments.

Unlike the other diseases for which New York State mandates vaccinations for schoolchildren, HPV is not contracted through the type of casual contact that occurs during the normal course of a public school day. Unvaccinated or infected students would not pose a risk to the remainder of the student body in a public school setting.

Such changes to Public Health law would likely result in the denial of access to a public education for many of our students, as parents grapple with weighing the risks of a relatively new vaccine. We believe this would be an infringement on the rights of children to a free and appropriate public education.

This amendment would also place an unfair burden on school districts to ensure compliance. The influenza vaccine is an annual vaccine with a very short time period for administration. Tracking compliance for this vaccine for every student on an annual basis would be extraordinarily onerous for school districts. This would effectively be a large, unfunded mandate requiring additional staff in schools to ensure compliance. Such mandates detract from the important work of educating and preparing our students for the future.

The Superintendent and Board of Education are opposed to these legislative changes. We ask our elected representatives to join us in opposition and vote against these bills.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Weisburd
Vice President, Board of Education

Michael J. Hynes, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

BOE/da
December 18, 2019

Assemblyman Anthony D'Urso
20 Vanderventer Avenue, Suite 100 West
Port Washington, New York 11050

Dear Assemblyman D'Urso:

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Elizabeth Weisburd
Vice President, Board of Education

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NORA H. JOHNSON  
President

ELIZABETH WEISBURD  
Vice President

December 18, 2019

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

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Elizabeth Weisburd  
Vice President, Board of Education

Michael J. Hynes, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

BOE/da