



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU
Governor

March 24, 2022

Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH, Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Dr. Walensky,

As Governor of New Hampshire, I have been immensely proud of the progress we have made as a state to mobilize and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Central to our successful efforts to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on our communities has been the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) Reopening Schools program.

This program has helped New Hampshire schools keep their doors open while fostering a safer, healthier return to in-person learning for students and educators alike. With the ELC program's expiration date quickly approaching, I am writing today to urge you to extend the timeline for the program, which is set to sunset in July 2022, to July 2023, which will help keep our schools safe and open.

New Hampshire schools are already looking ahead to the next calendar year and preparing for future variants that could arise. We should not leave teachers and educators in the lurch by removing the option to receive critical funding that will help support their efforts. While the ELC Reopening Schools program has been invaluable throughout the pandemic in helping get students back in the classroom, allowing funding to lapse now could hinder progress in New Hampshire and in schools nationwide.

Since the program's inception, the ELC Reopening Schools program has helped fund critical efforts identified by my Administration and our school districts, designed to identify positive cases in the classroom early on, decreasing the likelihood of major outbreaks that could shut down schools and threaten the health and safety of our local communities. Regular, routine testing for COVID-19 in the classroom also provides our educators and public health officials data that can be critical to decision making necessary to adequately prepare.

The ELC program works because it is flexible and scalable. States, school districts, and individual schools can implement testing protocols that meet the specific needs of their community—and they can scale these programs up or down based on testing data about transmissibility in a given school or community. For example, here in New Hampshire, we've

107 North Main Street, State House - Rm 208, Concord, New Hampshire 03301
Telephone (603) 271-2121 • FAX (603) 271-7640
Website: <http://www.governor.nh.gov/> • Email: governorsununu@nh.gov
TDD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964

utilized the ELC funding to enable school districts to make their own informed decisions around testing modality and frequency that best serve their local communities.

Extending the timeline for the ELC program will allow us to fully utilize our resources to help support testing procedures during summer school and throughout back-to-school season in the fall. This is a far better option than allowing funding for these crucial programs to lapse, and then trying to restart testing programs when the need to do so inevitably arises again. Continuing these valuable resources without a gap would ensure the good work our schools have done to keep students and staff safe.

Please keep these thoughts in mind as you consider the future of the ELC program. For the good of students and educators in New Hampshire and across the country, I urge the CDC to extend this funding through at least July 2023.

Thank you for your consideration, and please let me know if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,



Christopher T. Sununu
Governor