

August 22, 2019

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing you in regards to the recent passing of the law passed by the New York State legislature which removed the religious exemption to vaccinations from students based on their sincere religious beliefs. As a Board of Education Member for McGraw School District I am seeing the repercussions of this decision and know the irreparable harm it is already causing our students and their families. Some will now not receive special education services that they are in dire need of, some will be bullied outside of school at social events as their private medical information will now be obvious in a small town, some will have to move out of this state, some will suffer severe anxiety & depression as they feel the affects of being segregated and not welcomed in the school they love. I could go on and on about the harm as I know these families, I see their pain and the hard decisions they now have to make. Our students and families are being pressured to hurry and vaccinate with a large amount of vaccines in an untimely and unjust manner, against their sincerely held beliefs.

As a person in a position that is meant to help my community, my hands are tied and I am asking that you grant the stay so that all of these children can receive the education they deserve and deeply desire. These families deserve more time to make arrangements and make big changes in their lives that can forever affect them. We have no proof that any children who held a religious exemption have ever caused a problem in our school. Our school's policy is against religious discrimination. Our school in McGraw, NY was once the location of the New York Central College which opened in 1849 and was the first school in America to appoint black professors and allow people of all races, gender and religious beliefs to be educated together in the same classroom without prejudice. Our school's history means a lot to our community and we want to uphold protecting our student's constitution rights and religious freedoms and make sure no one is ever excluded for any reason.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this sensitive matter.

Respectfully,

Michael Murray
Board of Education Member
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