



For Immediate Release  
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### **Statement from BOE Union Coalition on the CDC's New Social Distancing Guidelines**

Because now is not the time to let down our guard, we intend to closely review the latest study that produced the agency's newest physical distancing guidelines. Moving to a three-foot requirement would mean dramatically reducing a safety standard that many school officials have been unable - or unwilling to meet - even further, putting our students at greater risk.

A survey of more than 4,000 Connecticut educators in December found that 70% of schools were not providing six feet of distance between students and nearly half (45%) had students three feet apart or less. Since December, many Connecticut schools have resumed full, in-person learning, allowing for even less social distancing.

While social distancing is an important strategy for maintaining students' and school staff members' health, we must also continue to prioritize all mitigation strategies. Connecticut teachers and school staff members are being vaccinated this month, which is vital to reopening. We must also continue to ensure everyone in our schools is wearing masks, washing their hands frequently, limiting the sharing of supplies, and that schools are being properly cleaned and disinfected. When they are eligible later this year, we hope students aged 16 and above will take advantage of the opportunity to be vaccinated.

The American Rescue Plan provides us with an important opportunity that all districts must make use of to replace or upgrade HVAC systems. In the December survey, 70% of teachers in urban districts and 60% in non-urban districts said ventilation is a problem in their school, making their school buildings unsafe during the pandemic. Poor air quality in schools was a problem before COVID and now, thanks to federal funds, we have the opportunity to improve the health of students and educators during the pandemic and beyond.

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The Board of Education Union Coalition represents over 60,000 public school employees (teachers and non-certified education personnel) across the state and includes members in the following labor federations and their affiliated unions: AFSCME, AFT Connecticut, CEA, CSEA SEIU Local 2001, CEUI Local 511, MEUI Local 506, and UAW.

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