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May 2025

**TO:** BOCES District Superintendents  
Superintendents of Public Schools  
Charter School Leaders  
Non-Public School Administrators

**FROM:** Dr. Santosha Oliver, Assistant Commissioner

**SUBJECT:** International Water Safety Day – May 15

Each year, on May 15, communities worldwide recognize International Water Safety Day to raise awareness about the importance of water safety and drowning prevention. As New York State continues to prioritize student health, safety, and wellness, this day offers an opportunity to reflect on the role education can play in equipping students with the knowledge and decision-making skills needed to stay safe in, on, and around water.

Drowning is a leading cause of unintentional injury death among children. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), drowning is the number one cause of death for children ages 1-4 and remains a significant risk through adolescence. Whether integrated into health instruction, physical education, or school-wide wellness efforts, water safety education can make a difference in preventing these tragedies.

While curriculum decisions are made locally, districts may consider how water safety concepts, such as recognizing environmental hazards, practicing safe behaviors, and understanding the importance of supervision, can be integrated into existing health or physical education programming. Collaboration with local agencies, community organizations, or aquatic facilities may also support these efforts.

As we recognize International Water Safety Day, NYSED reaffirms its support for promoting student safety through education and interagency collaboration. We thank educators, administrators, and community partners who continue to create learning environments where every student can thrive on land and in the water.

For more information on water safety, please visit the [CDC's Water Safety page](#) or connect with local water safety coalitions.