

Lancaster Central School District

177 Central Avenue
Lancaster, NY 14086
(716) 686-3201

Michael J. Vallely, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

December 7, 2020

Dear Lancaster School District Students, Staff and Families:

I hope you and your loved ones are healthy and safe. On Friday night, the New York State Department of Health followed up on Governor Cuomo's comments during the week, and released updated guidance regarding the COVID-19 testing requirements for schools (see [here 12-04-20 Testing Requirement for Schools in Orange and Red Zone Micro-Cluster](#)).

For your convenience, a summary of the Guidance is listed below:

- In-person instruction can continue for schools located in red or orange micro-cluster zones as designated by NYS.
- There no longer is a requirement for schools located in red and orange zones to test 100% of faculty, staff, and students prior to resuming in-person instruction.
- For schools located in a geographic area designated as an orange zone, a total of 20% of in-person students, faculty and staff must be tested for COVID-19 over the one-month period following the zone designation (red zone = 30%).
- The numbers tested should be proportionately spread across the month (e.g., 5% per building per week in an orange zone).
- A school may be required to move to fully remote instruction if random sampling generates a significant amount of positive cases in any school as outlined in the updated guidance.
- Parents, faculty and staff must continue the practices of daily health screening. Schools must adhere to all State-issued requirements including wearing masks at all times while at school and maintaining six feet of social distance in classrooms.
- For further details on COVID-testing for our students and staff, please visit our [COVID-19 & Reopening Information website](#).

Based on information and data from local, state, and national health professionals, schools are safe places for students. Moreover, it has been shown that they have much less COVID-19 transmission than the larger community, especially when faculty, staff and students faithfully follow the virus mitigation strategies.

In Lancaster, we believe that students learn best while in school with their teacher(s). Our goal has been to have our young people in school learning to the fullest extent possible. Getting students back to in-person instruction as quickly as possible is imperative for their academic needs as well as their social/emotional needs.

To continue to fulfill our mission to the students of Lancaster, our plan is to safely reopen all Lancaster schools for hybrid in-person instruction PreK-12 beginning on Monday, December 14, 2020. This decision was made in collaboration with a significant number of Erie County school

districts that will also return to in-person instruction on this date. All of our school districts share employees who are also parents of children who attend schools in other school districts. We believed that establishing a common return date among as many districts as possible was imperative to hopefully limit the need for large numbers of substitute teachers upon our return to in-person learning. This ensures that Lancaster students and students across the region have access to their teachers to maximize learning and the overall student experience.

Thank you for your continued patience, support, and understanding as we do our best to provide the students of Lancaster with an education that is second to none.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael J. Vallely". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Michael J. Vallely, Ph.D.

Superintendent of Schools