

TONAWANDA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

100 HINDS STREET
TONAWANDA, NEW YORK 14150
716-694-7784-Phone 716-695-8738-Fax



TIMOTHY A. OLDENBURG, Ed.D.
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

November 10, 2020

Dear Tonawanda City School District Students and Families:

I wanted to update you with information regarding the Governor's designation of our community and surrounding areas as a YELLOW ZONE.

THIS MESSAGE IS NOT A DECLARATION OF A SHIFT TO A FULLY REMOTE INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL FOR ALL STUDENTS.

A designated YELLOW ZONE has many restrictions for a community. For schools to remain in the hybrid model, this designation requires schools to randomly COVID test 20% of the each school's population every week.

For our district to continue to offer an in-person, hybrid instructional model we will need to have the consent of parents (for their children) and staff to be COVID tested if they are randomly selected during any of the weeks that we remain in a YELLOW ZONE.

As we continue to request information regarding the procedures and mandates of a Yellow Zone designation, I wanted to share additional information that we are beginning to understand. To date, we have not received any official documentation or guidance from the Governor, NYSDOH, or ECDOH.

These are some points, as we understand them at this time:

- A Yellow Zone requires a random testing of 20% of the school's population each week. Each week will be a new random selection. This means a person could be randomly selected multiple times.
- Students whose parent does not give consent to be tested would not be allowed to participate in hybrid instruction. Students would be transitioned to a fully remote program.
- The test is free.
- The test is a small nasal swab.
- The test is called the Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card.
- The attached video link shows the administration of a rapid test.
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5dRjdLVAPM&feature=youtu.be>)
- The attached link explains more about the rapid test.
(<https://www.globalpointofcare.abbott/en/support/product-installation-training/navica-brand/navica-binaxnow-ag-training.html>)

- Testing locations have not been determined. They may be community-based or school-based.
- Parents will be notified for formal consent if their child(ren) is randomly selected.
- An appointment time would be scheduled and include the parent. Testing will NOT take place in classrooms or without parent advance notice, parent consent, and parent participation.
- Erie County is no longer offering preference for students and staff for rapid tests. Selected individuals would be subject to participate in this rapid testing program.
- We are evaluating options and partners to assist in test administration. This will be in close contact and supervision of our school physician.
- It is possible that we will transition to a fully remote instructional program due to many reasons associated with the increased infection rate, Yellow Zone designation, ability to deliver quality instruction, student and staff attendance/quarantines, and other challenging reasons.
- As we wait for additional information and guidance, we will continue to move forward with our hybrid program in our buildings.
- We will continue to share information with our school community as soon as it becomes available.

The survey shared yesterday was a simple gauge of possible participation and community support required by the Governor's Yellow Zone designation for schools to remain in the hybrid model. This survey is NOT your formal consent to testing. Your response is NOT a final or binding commitment to have your child(ren) tested. Instead, your response will help us determine whether investing in the mandated testing is the appropriate decision for our future instructional programming.

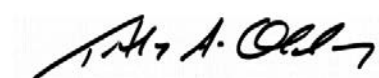
If learning of this new testing information changes your position and response previously submitted to the survey, you can take the survey again. Please use the indicator "2" after your last name (Ex. Oldenburg2). The survey can be taken by clicking the link <https://forms.gle/1bW6AwzRJ3qnLofd7>.

All students, parents, guardians, and siblings should continue to monitor their health for symptoms of COVID-19 and follow the guidelines listed on the District website with regard to daily temperature screening and completion of the health questionnaire prior to arriving at the school or district facility.

Please remember, if you are ill or experiencing any of the symptoms of COVID-19, stay at home and contact your medical provider for assistance.

Thank you for your continued support and patience with our district. Please continue to take necessary precautions and continue with recommended healthy actions to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19 in your homes and in our schools. Go Warriors!

Sincerely,



Timothy A. Oldenburg, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools