

November 12, 2020

Dear Orleans County Residents,

The rate of COVID-19 infection is increasing in Orleans County. Governor Andrew Cuomo has instituted a new strategy of monitoring and responding to outbreaks of new micro-cluster cases or cases within a specific geographic area. Our students, faculty and staff have diligently followed our health and safety protocols to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Despite everyone's best efforts, the rising community spread of the virus could impact our instructional models.

The governor's micro-cluster strategy uses multiple data points (positivity rate, hospitalizations, population density, contact tracing, etc.) to identify a geographic area by region, county, zip code, or a more granular location. Once an area has been identified, the local Department of Health engages in calibrated and focused containment efforts. Recently, the governor declared most of Monroe County and most of Northern Erie County to be a "Yellow Zone," and we are currently observing how this is negatively affecting their school programs..

We want our schools to stay open! On behalf of the students and families in the Orleans County School Districts, we're asking for your help to ensure schools remain open for in-person instruction. Districts under the Yellow Zone requirements have to test 20% of their students and staff members weekly to continue with face to face instruction. If that 7-day rolling average continues to rise, those districts would be considered Orange Zones and would be forced to go fully remote.

Over the last week, the positivity rate in Orleans County has grown to average nearly 4%. With these escalating positivity rates some or all of our Orleans County school districts could enter a Yellow or Orange Zone, subsequently resulting in a fully remote instructional environment. Please check [this chart](#) from the governor's office to see how these rates could impact Orleans County schools and businesses. Currently, the Orleans County 7-day rolling average is 3.7%. In short, the county is getting close to being in a precarious spot as it relates to whether our students can attend school in-person.

We respectfully request that everyone follow the face covering, social distancing, hand washing, and disinfecting protocols our students and staff members adhere to while in school. Our students and staff have done a tremendous job of maintaining a COVID-safe environment while in school. Please help us by following these safety and mitigation procedures outside of school as well. We want our students in school. The only way we can make that happen is to reduce and stabilize the rates of infection within our region.

Thank you once again for your partnership and collaboration. Stay safe and well.

Sincerely,
Brain Bartalo, Superintendent of Holley CSD
Scott Bischooping, Interim Superintendent of Albion CSD
Julie Christensen, Superintendent of Kendall CSD
Mark Kruzynski, Superintendent of Medina CSD
Jason Smith, Superintendent of Lyndonville CSD