



# TONAWANDA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

November 18, 2020

Dear Tonawanda City School District Students, Staff and Families:

**Effective Monday, November 23, 2020, ALL students will be participating in a fully remote instructional program.**

Due to the recent designation of our community as an **ORANGE ZONE**, as defined by the Governor's micro cluster strategy, other COVID-19 community spread concerns, and challenges with staffing and student attendance due to quarantines and other related issues, our district will shift to a fully remote instructional mode AFTER the completion of the school day on Friday, November 20, 2020.

The EARLIEST return to the hybrid instructional model will be Monday, December 7, 2020. We will assess our zone designation and the many factors that will allow us to re-open our hybrid instructional model each week.

Cohort A and B students will meet with teachers over the next two day to prepare for this transition. Parents/Guardians will be hearing from teachers and building principals very soon regarding schedules, virtual meetings/Google Meets, technology concerns, and other supports that we can offer to best engage with our students. Should your child need access to the building for items that have been left behind, please contact the building principal.

As educators, we are deeply disappointed that our district, and many others in our region, cannot feasibly comply and administer the requirements necessary to operate in this zone designation. We are fully aware and understand the frustration, scheduling conflicts, economic hardships and instructional challenges that a pivot to a fully remote program for ALL students presents to our families and school community.

Please know that we will continue to work to improve our instructional programs and remote models to deliver the highest level of education possible to our students during this global pandemic and national health crisis. We will continue to prepare to welcome our students back to our schools at the first possible opportunity. We will work to be best prepared to administer the random COVID testing to our school population under the parameters of the Yellow Zone as soon as our color designation changes in our city or region.

The exact factors of our move to remote learning, and the difficulty in returning to in-person learning in a Red/Orange Zone, are important. Being declared an Orange Zone brings with it rigorous testing requirements, placing a significant public health mandate on schools. In order to reopen while a school is in an Orange Zone, schools are required to:

- Test 100% of all in-person students and staff during the first week of in-person learning, and

- Test 25% of all in-person students and staff each week until the school is no longer in an Orange Zone
- Require all who test positive for COVID or refuse to be tested to remain in a fully remote instructional model

We are a public school district and not a public health institution. Even with the state providing the testing kits, because of this mandate and its associated costs, while also educating children without substantial federal, state and local assistance, it is simply not possible to fulfill the current requirements of an Orange or Red zone designation.

It is important that I recognize our students, staff, and parents that have faithfully and successfully adhered to the health and safety protocols and requirements at our schools each day. I am grateful for your support and efforts to best support our students while providing a hybrid instructional model during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Our ability to return to a hybrid or in-person instructional model will depend upon the actions and efforts of our entire city, community and region. I am optimistic that we will realize reductions in COVID infection rates and prompt adjustments can be made to the Governor's micro cluster strategy, and associated requirements, that will allow our students to return to school as soon as possible.

Please continue to communicate with your child's building principal and teachers should you have questions or concerns regarding this transition. No concern is too big or too small. We are committed to serving you and meeting the needs of ALL our students.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy A. Oldenburg", written in a cursive style.

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