



TONAWANDA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

December 2, 2020

Dear Tonawanda City School District Students, Staff and Families:

Due to the recent designation of our community as an **ORANGE ZONE**, as defined by the Governor's micro cluster strategy, and the changing guidance regarding operating in a hybrid model in this zone designation, our district will continue to operate in a fully remote instructional program.

We will assess our zone designation and the many factors that will allow us to re-open our hybrid instructional model each week. We will continue to communicate and update our school community with any opportunity to appropriately, safely, and effectively return our students and staff to the hybrid model as soon as possible.

To date, we have NOT received the new guidance from the Governor or the NYSDOH for ORANGE Zones regarding the changing parameters, COVID-19 testing requirements, and other regulations. We continue to prepare for this guidance, determine our capacity to implement these mandates, and plan to return our students to a hybrid model of in-person instruction. The transition between hybrid and remote instructional models takes time, coordination, and careful preparation among administrators, staff, students, and families.

Public schools have been deemed safe and healthy places for students and staff during this pandemic. Recently, state and local medical experts have clearly stated that there has been very little evidence that COVID-19 infections have been transmitted or traced to schools. The Governor said today "schools have a very low infection rate in students and staff. This shows that schools are safer than their surrounding communities for students and teachers."

While there are many factors that influence our ability to return to a hybrid model, including COVID-19 community spread concerns, challenges with staffing and student attendance due to quarantines, and other related issues, we are optimistic that we will be returning to a hybrid model in the near future.

The decision to extend this fully remote instructional model is necessitated by our understanding of the challenges, complications, and needs of our families and community. We realize the diverse situations facing our families and we are working to make decisions that best meet the needs of all students during these unprecedented times in public education.

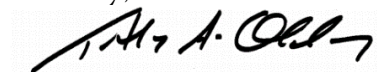
We will continue to prepare to welcome our students back to our schools at the first possible opportunity. We will work to be best prepared to administer the random COVID-19 testing to our school population under the parameters of the micro cluster strategy, as soon as these new standards are established and received by school districts.

Please be reminded that our ability to return to a hybrid model will be directly dependent on our ability to secure consent from students (parents/guardians) and staff to participate in the required random COVID-19 testing. If you are contacted to provide consent to participate in the random testing, please consider consenting to this process.

Please continue to communicate with your child's building principal and teachers should you have questions or concerns regarding this transition. 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 over a light gray rectangular background.

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