



TONAWANDA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

August 25, 2021

Dear Tonawanda City School District Families and Staff,

Our district is aware and has received the recent Erie County Department of Health guidance for students to attend in-person instruction to begin the 2021-2022 school year. Further guidance, mandates, and restrictions may be delivered from the new Governor and the NYSDOH. Our practices and protocols are subject to change based on emerging and new guidance/mandates.

We are excited to be returning our students to the classroom for instruction, support, and related services on a regular school schedule. To do this safely, we need to follow the requirements, mandates, and recommendations that have been issued to schools in Erie County. Schools in Niagara and other counties are required to follow the laws, mandates, and restrictions that are applicable to their governing agencies.

However, this guidance that has been issued by the ECDOH was created in partnership with the Superintendents from Erie County. As districts, our primary goal was to fully operate our schools for students to attend in-person, every day, every week. In many areas of the guidance, there is support and operational flexibility to provide the needed instruction, support, and services to our students.

This guidance includes many strategies that can be layered and used in a variety of settings and situations to reduce and mitigate the potential for virus spread. These strategies will be implemented to the extent possible that allows us to fully operate our instructional and support programs for students each day. This guidance can be found on our website or by clicking [HERE](#).

Please see the following brief notes:

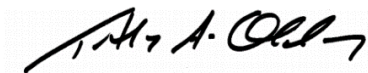
- **The mask mandate in our buildings for ALL students and staff will begin immediately.** This is required of all students when they are inside the school building (exclusive of eating, drinking, mask breaks, and actively performing wind instruments/vocals/physical education).
- The weekly (Sundays at 6 p.m.) phone calls reminding parents of the required daily screening will begin this Sunday. The daily text messages will begin at 7 a.m. on Wednesday, September 1. The new screening form and attestation can be found [HERE](#).
- Our cleaning and disinfecting processes will continue each day.
- Our ventilation systems have been serviced, including new filters, and will be used to their capacity to increase the air flow and air transfers in each building. Open windows and interior doors will be strongly encouraged as weather permits.
- Classes will be strongly encouraged to move outdoors for instruction and/or play whenever possible/feasible.

- Mask breaks will be offered for approximately 5 minutes per hour, as scheduled by the staff member. This requires the staggering of mask breaks within the classroom and that the entire class cannot enjoy the same 5 minute mask break.
- Physical distancing is recommended to be 3 feet between students and 6 feet for adults when between adults and students.
- Students need to be 6 feet distanced when singing, playing a wind instrument, or involved in a physical/PE/aerobic activity. In all other cases, students should be 3 feet apart from one another.
- **It is important that students and staff do not enter the building when they are experiencing symptoms related to COVID. Students and staff that begin recognizing symptoms of COVID while at school should contact the school nurse immediately.** Quarantines can be challenging and inconvenient for students and families that are impacted by these required measures. Please consider all of us when making decisions on entering our buildings each day.
- People that are vaccinated are NOT required to quarantine if they are considered a close contact who is not experiencing symptoms of COVID. This will be determined as part of our contact tracing process.
- I am optimistic that our position and progress with COVID within our community will change during the year and allow for the appropriate alteration and modification of our practices.

We have created a guidance update form that can be viewed [HERE](#). This form was designed to answer the most commonly asked questions and to further define our processes and expectations as we begin the school year.

Please enjoy the excitement and wonder of the start of another school year. We are committed to meeting the needs of each student and providing a meaningful, rigorous, and caring instructional program for our students and families. We are looking forward to seeing your children and experiencing a successful 2021-2022 school year beginning on Wednesday, September 1, 2021.

Sincerely,



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