



TUXEDO UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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January 5, 2022

Dear Tuxedo School Community,

I want to thank you for your patience and continued support, as the situation caused by the pandemic continues to deteriorate. It became clear on Tuesday, January 4th that we needed to continue on remote learning through Friday, January 7th, due to a lack of essential staff to open the buildings to in-person instruction.

Please be assured that the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff are our primary concern. Our goal is to return to in-person instruction as soon as feasibly possible. Remote instruction is our back-up plan when we are unable to offer in-person.

Achieving our objective of a safe and healthy in-person instructional day is going to require the teamwork and cooperation of our entire school community; administrators, faculty, staff, parents and students. I am asking for your understanding as there are many moving parts to consider here including:

1. The ability to field an adequate number of essential employees to safely open the buildings.
2. To ensure there are enough non-infected/non-quarantined students to warrant in-person instruction. It is better to offer remote instruction to all students, than have a large number of students receiving no instruction while they are at home.
3. To implement multiple mitigation strategies to prevent the spread of the virus while in school and on the bus.

We have developed a plan to address each of these items individually. However, I cannot stress the point enough that since the number of people infected changes frequently, the guidance from federal, state and local health officials changes regularly and the virus itself mutates rapidly, we are operating in an environment of uncertainty. It is a fluid situation that may require all of us to pivot and modify our plans as needed (i.e. daily, weekly, monthly).

1. The plan to monitor adequate staffing is that each afternoon, I meet with certain members of the District's COVID Committee to review and assess the availability of essential personnel to open school.

2. To determine the level of students available to attend in-person instruction I ask that parents contact our health office and inform our nursing staff of any positive cases, quarantining due to exposures, or anyone at home exhibiting possible COVID symptoms (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>) or any other possible transmittable illnesses. Our health office can be reached at

mcastricone@tuxedoufsd.org (845) 351-4797 x 3106

Once we know how many students are available for in-person instruction we can plan on holding classes in school. Otherwise, we will offer remote instruction.

3. In addition to wearing masks, social distancing, quarantining, and vaccinating, testing and vigilance in looking out for symptoms is critical. We ask that parents contact our Health Office and inform our nursing staff whether their students are vaccinated or not. This information will be kept confidential and shall not become any part of student's permanent records. This information is simply for the nursing staff's information only. Governor Hochul has developed a test-to-stay (TTS) program for K-12 students. For more information about this program please see (https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/12/testtostay-memo_12-23-21.pdf).

In essence the NY State TTS program provides an at-home antigen rapid test available to students who are not vaccinated and have been exposed to a positive COVID-19 case in school. Students who test negative on a cadence of these tests can avoid quarantine. While we like the plan, we would like to do more to prevent the spread. However, the success of our enhanced plan depends on your cooperation.

The District is offering PCR testing to all students, administrators, faculty and staff. Unlike rapid tests, which are subject to false positive and false negative results, PCR (polymerase chain reaction) testing is the gold standard in assessing the COVID infection. The test will be administered by the District's professional nursing staff at the George Grant Mason (GGM) Cafeteria/Community Room. Test results are expected back within 24-48 hours and will be sent to the respective parties being tested (i.e. students parent(s), employee) with a copy going to the District's Health Office. Each individual who elects to participate in this program will have to complete an online consent form. The consent form can either be completed at home or on site prior to the testing being performed. Staff will be available to assist with this process. If you have health insurance and that insurance will cover this testing, your carrier will be charged for the testing. If you either (a) do not have health insurance or (b) have health insurance that will not cover the testing, federal CARES Act funding will be utilized to cover the cost. As it very difficult to find available testing, as well as waiting lines at testing sites being extremely long, we hope you will take advantage of this

opportunity to get peace of mind with minimal inconvenience. The program will also provide the best assurance to our school community that we are doing our utmost to ensure a healthy and safe learning environment for all.

More information will be forthcoming tomorrow about the PCR testing and our plan for returning to in-person instruction. Thank you for your patience and cooperation.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey T. White

Superintendent of Schools