

North Greenbush Common School District

12/11/20

Dear Families:

As COVID-19 cases rise across our region and state, we continue to meet with local superintendents and our county health department to discuss these developments and ways we can continue to keep our building safely open.

New York State has implemented a micro-cluster strategy to designate areas with high COVID-19 infection rates as Yellow, Orange, or Red zones, based on positivity rates and daily new cases. If a zip code, census tract or region is placed in one of those zones, there will be restrictions for schools.

While Little Red is NOT currently in one of these zones, we are working with Rensselaer County DOH and Questar III BOCES to be ready if any part of our community is labeled. Our district plans to remain open during Yellow, Orange and Red Zones if it can comply with the state's testing requirements. Please see the chart below for the state's criteria for our county.

Today, the Governor announced changes to the zone designation metric and indicated that the state would announce any new zones on Monday, based on weekend data.

- A **Yellow Zone** is a geographic area (zip code, census tract, etc.) with a 3 percent positivity rate over the past 10 days AND the cluster is in top 10 percent for hospital admissions per capita over the past week and week-over-week growth in daily admissions.
- An **Orange Zone** is a geographic area (zip code, census tract, etc.) with 4 percent positivity rate over the past 10 days AND 85 percent hospital capacity OR the Department of Health determines unacceptably high rate of hospital admissions.
- A **Red Zone** is a geographic area (zip code, census tract, etc.) that is 21 days from 90 percent hospital capacity.

Screening Tests

In order for Little Red to remain open while in a Yellow Zone, it must commit to conducting rapid screening tests on 20 percent of the in-person students and staff over a two-week period. Students and staff members will be randomly chosen from a pool of individuals. If Little Red enters an Orange Zone, we will need to continue to test new students and staff at a rate of 20 percent per month. If we enter a Red Zone, we will need to continue to test students and staff at a rate of 30 percent per month. The school district is preparing plans to train medical professionals in the rapid testing protocol.

Consent Form

Just as we have asked for your continued assistance with following the new COVID-19 protocols, we would need your permission to administer tests to your children. We will send out a test consent form in the coming days.

Testing

The rapid test involves a non-invasive cotton swab swiping just inside the lowermost portion of the nostril. These are not the deep-sinus swab tests that are conducted at medical facilities. The test results are available within minutes. Individual test results will only be shared with families, the school nurse, and the local department of health. We will randomly choose students from a pool of individuals whose parents have consented to the test. If a student or staff member tests positive, they will be sent home and must stay at home until they are released by the county department of health.

Going Forward

We will provide an update if the state designates any part of our community as a cluster zone, including sharing additional information on our testing plan. Please continue to complete our screening forms as required.

As always, thank you for all that you do to support our school district. We continue to be encouraged by our community's resiliency amid adversity – and flexibility and patience throughout the pandemic. We will continue to put the health and safety of our students and staff at the forefront of every decision made.