

Revised NYS Guidance for School Districts



- **New guidance was released by NYS on Friday, April 9**

- A link to the 24-page document can be found on the District homepage.

- **Major changes:**

- At the elementary school level, a minimum of 3 feet of social distancing between students is permissible during instruction *[Page 7]*.
- At the middle/high school level, 3 feet is permissible in areas with lower rates of transmission based on CDC criteria. In higher-transmission areas, it is only permissible in schools that cohort (cohorting is keeping one group of students together for the day) *[Page 7]*.
 - This is determined by 2 different measures: 7-day positivity rate and total new cases over the past 7 days (whichever is higher) *[Page 22]*.
 - At 5.1% as of April 14, Erie County meets the criteria as a lower-transmission area based on positivity rate (must be below 8%) but meets the criteria as a higher-transmission area based on total new cases (currently 384/100,000 residents over the past 7 days as of April 14; must be below 100/100,000 residents).
 - The high schools do not cohort students and the middle schools do not fully cohort students so 6 feet of social distancing is still required in middle/high schools.
- In all schools, 6 feet is required in common areas (where possible), during eating, while singing/playing wind instruments, during PE, between children/adults, and among adults *[Page 8]*.
- Physical barriers are no longer recommended *[Page 8]*.
- Districts must submit/post their revised plans and solicit community feedback *[Page 7]*.
- Guidance on athletics remains unchanged *[Page 7]*.

Goals & Areas of Focus



- **Therefore, our plan is to transition to five days of attendance for elementary schools.**
 - The District is striving for Monday, April 26 to bring Gr. K-4 students back for 5 days of instruction.
- **Continuing areas of focus:**
 - **Breakfast:** Schools are continuing to plan for the required 6 feet of social distancing during breakfast. Schools are still trying to resolve this challenge. NYS is not permitting breakfast to be sent home with students for the following day.
 - **Lunch:** Schools are continuing to plan for the required 6 feet of social distancing during lunch periods, using available spaces in the building to keep students sufficiently spread out.
 - **Meal Kits:** Meal kits would not be available for elementary students attending school in person, since they will be served breakfast/lunch each school day. They would still be available for those not attending in person, so a procedure is being developed to facilitate pick-up for those families.
 - **Pick-Up/Drop-Off:** Schools will work to promote more staggered arrival/dismissal times. This partnership is necessary to minimize congestion with more students in attendance.
 - **Transportation:** Transportation will strive to maintain 1 student per seat (except for siblings) to the greatest extent possible per NYS guidance. Families need to notify Transportation of changes to Alternate Stops which will be the same for all added days of in-person instruction.
 - **Dividers:** Per CDC recommendations and NYS guidance, dividers will be removed from classrooms.
 - **Ventilation/Airflow:** The District will continue to closely monitor airflow/ventilation. Now with warmer weather, we can expect that opening windows will increase airflow even more in classrooms and on school buses.
 - **Quarantine:** By moving to 3 feet between students in elementary schools, more students would be placed into quarantine, since 6 feet remains the standard for contact tracing. Elementary school families will need to be prepared for this possibility.
 - **Technology:** There will be some technology changes coming including new devices and younger students would no longer have to transport devices back and forth between school and home.

Goals & Areas of Focus (cont.)



- All of the District's strict policies and procedures will continue to be adhered to in areas such as cleaning, disinfecting, hygiene, temperature/symptom screening, and contact tracing, pursuant with all NYS requirements.
- Group B students will still attend on Wednesday, April 21, as part of the plan to add Wednesdays as days of instruction under the current instructional model.
- We are continuing to look at options/opportunities for middle/high schools:
 - If Erie County meets the criteria as a lower-transmission area, middle/high schools will be able to transition to 3 feet of social distancing. However, the criteria will be very difficult to meet based on total number of cases.
- On April 12, NYS released new guidance on End of Academic Year Celebrations During the COVID-19 State of Emergency (updated April 12, 2021).
 - The guidance includes different rules and limits on participants/capacity for indoor and outdoor events.
 - Schools are reviewing this guidance, exploring different options and gathering feedback from students and families.
- Assessments will continue next week as planned.

Next Steps



- ✓ A recording of the Board of Education Meeting presentation was posted and shared with staff/families.
- ✓ The District Reopening Task Force met Wednesday, April 14 to discuss these developments.
- ✓ The Parent Cabinet met Wednesday, April 14 and a recording was posted/shared with all families.
- ✓ Virtual Q&A meeting for all District stakeholders: 5-6 p.m. Thursday, April 15 via YouTube Live. A recording and the text of the comments/responses will be posted/shared for those who cannot participate.
- ✓ An update will be included in Friday's Ken-Ton Weekly Connection.
- ✓ Stakeholders will be able to submit additional questions/comments through the website prior to 4 p.m. Friday, April 16. An FAQ will be created and posted online by the beginning of next week.
- ❑ The revised Reopening Plan will be posted to the District website and submitted to NYSED and Erie County DOH once completed.
- ❑ Elementary schools will conduct virtual meetings with families to discuss details regarding breakfast, lunch, pick-up/drop-off, etc.