

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%, 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 350/100,000 residents over the past 7 days; 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 (without multiple periods for breakfast). Schools are still trying to resolve this challenge.
 - **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 the NYS guidance.
 - **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.

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 Monday, 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 this presentation will be posted and shared with staff/families following the meeting.
- The District Reopening Task Force will meet tomorrow (Wednesday, April 14) to discuss these developments.
- The Parent Cabinet will also meet tomorrow (Wednesday, April 14) and a recording will be posted/shared with all families.
- A virtual Q&A meeting for all District stakeholders will take place from 5-6 p.m. Thursday, April 15 via YouTube Live.
 - The format will be the same as previous sessions with an update by the Superintendent followed by a Q&A.
 - Anyone can ask questions/share concerns in Live Chat which will be answered on screen and in Live Chat by the Superintendent and by District administrators.
 - A recording and the text of the comments/responses will be posted/shared for those who cannot participate.
- Stakeholders will be able to submit additional questions/comments through the website prior to 4 p.m. Friday, April 16 (a link will be posted/shared). An FAQ will be created and posted online by the beginning of next week.
- An update will be included in Friday's Ken-Ton Weekly Connection.
- 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.