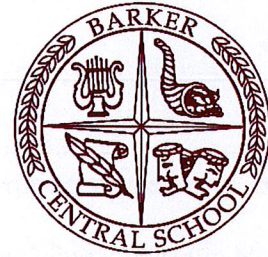


Barker Central School

1628 QUAKER ROAD, BARKER, NEW YORK 14012-0328

Fax 716.795.3394



Jacob L. Reimer

Superintendent of Schools

716.795.3832

jreimer@barkerksd.net

11/13/2020

Dear Barker Families:

The rate of COVID-19 infection is increasing in Western New York, and the rate in Niagara County was 4.7% on November 10. Governor Cuomo has instituted a new strategy of monitoring and responding to outbreaks of new cases within a limited and definable geographic area, which are called micro-clusters. Our students, faculty, and staff have diligently followed our health and safety protocols to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Despite everyone's best efforts, the rising community spread of the virus could impact the current Barker instructional model.

The Governor's micro-cluster strategy uses multiple data points (positivity rate, hospitalizations, population density, contact tracing, etc.) to identify a geographic area by region, county, zip code, or a more granular location. Once an area has been identified, the local Department of Health engages in calibrated and focused containment efforts. The containment efforts include designating the micro-cluster zone with a color to indicate the severity of the outbreak. The possible color-coded micro-cluster zones are as follows:

"Yellow Zone": Seven day rolling positive test rate average above 3% and 12 or more new cases per 100,000 residents for ten consecutive days.

"Orange Zone": Seven day rolling positive test rate average above 4% and 12 or more new cases per 100,000 residents for ten consecutive days.

"Red Zone": Seven day rolling positive test rate average above 5% and 12 or more new cases per 100,000 residents for ten consecutive days.

The zones can include specific streets and addresses or could include buildings within an identified zip code. It is possible for a school in one zip code to be designated in a micro-cluster, while a school in a different zip code nearby would not be. At this time, Barker Central School District schools are not located in an identified micro-cluster, but should this change our entire district will follow the same protocols as required under the Governor's plan.

If a school building is designated to be in a yellow zone micro-cluster, the school can potentially remain open to in-person instruction, however, it would need to randomly identify and test 20% of its students

and staff each week until the data points drop below the yellow zone levels. If the school cannot meet these testing parameters, it must transition to fully remote instruction. It is important to note that the Niagara County Department of Health (NCDoH) has informed us that at this time they are unable to assist school districts with the random testing requirements.

Should our school buildings be placed within an identified orange or red zone, the school will be required to transition temporarily to fully remote instruction for at least two weeks. Before reopening for in-person instruction, all students, faculty, and staff must have a negative COVID-19 test result before returning to in-person schooling. The school must also be able to test 20% of students and staff each week.

The Governor's office identified some micro-clusters within Western New York this week throughout Erie County. Barker families need to be prepared to transition temporarily to remote instruction, and create plans for child-care, if our schools are identified as being within a micro-cluster.

Please know it is our goal to maintain in-person instruction as long as cases remain low in our county. We will continue to work closely with the Niagara County Department of Health, and make decisions based on local, regional and state data.

As always, we will keep you informed as circumstances change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JLR', followed by a horizontal line.

Jacob L. Reimer
Superintendent