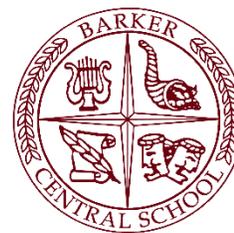


Barker Central School

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Superintendent of Schools
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Dear Barker Learning Community,

I hope this communication finds all of you healthy, safe, and ready to get back to learning after the well-deserved Spring Recess.

As you may have heard, the New York State Department of Health released updated guidance late Friday evening pertaining to the safe return to school during the pandemic. The entire NYS guidance can be found at this link: [https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools MasterGuidance.pdf](https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Pre-K%20to%20Grade%2012%20Schools%20MasterGuidance.pdf). The entire CDC guidance can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html>.

In a nutshell, the new guidance reduces the amount of social distancing needed for in-person instruction to be 3 feet. However, there are some exceptions to the 3 feet rule. First, 6 feet of distancing is still required while eating food, when in physical education, and when performing musically. Additionally, if community transmission within Niagara County exceeds certain thresholds, it may also limit a school's ability to be at 3 feet of social distancing during instruction. This particular aspect is more specifically targeted to the Jr. Sr. High School levels. Thankfully, the District can accommodate some of our students for greater in person instruction under these new guidelines!

Due to the high community transmission rate, it is the District's intent to return **ONLY** our elementary students, grades K-6, to 4 day per week instruction beginning on April 26, 2021. Pre K students will continue to attend in their current model of two full days per week for the rest of the school year. Jr.-Sr. HS students will also continue to remain in the current hybrid model of instruction until the community transmission thresholds fall below the limits that allow for greater in person instruction. If or when the Jr. Sr. HS is allowed to increase instruction to 4 days per week, we will let the community know at least a week in advance of the ability to return.

With our end goal of returning all kids to more in person instruction under the new guidelines, we are asking all families of students PreK-12 to complete a new survey that will inform the District of each family's intent to either return to 4 day per week instruction or to remain remote. Please note that with this change, we can no longer honor requests to move back and forth between in-person and full remote. Once a student is in full remote instruction, they will not be able to return to in-person instruction for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year. For those at the Jr. Sr. HS level, while your student(s) may not be returning to 4 day per week instruction at this time, please fill the survey out so we have this information in the event that the Jr. Sr. HS students are able to return in the future.

The survey should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete. Please make sure to read each question carefully and answer all questions to the best of your ability. Here is a link to the survey, which can also be found on the District website:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/18ByCUwyGY04Q16f7s1Feet6LmFj1GAXxKkr0VSG-ITE/edit?usp=sharing_eip&ts=60744e78

Please note that the transportation of our students is a very important piece of our return. Per state guidance, we are asking any family that is able to transport their children to do so for the rest of the year. We know that not all families can do this though. Like in the fall, the survey will ask if your child(ren) require transportation. Please make sure to let us know what you need. Again, if you can transport your children, or they can walk to school, please try to do so.

With a short timeframe before we would like to return our K-6 students to 4 days per week instruction on April 26, 2021, **we are asking families to please complete the survey by noon on April 15, 2021.** The information we receive from these surveys will help guide our additional planning and decision making as we continue to prepare for the return.

Lastly, the new guidance requires the District to gather school and community input. As such, we will be discussing these tentative plans with our staff tomorrow, April 13 in addition to holding two public forums in our Jr.-Sr. HS Auditorium on Thursday, April 15 at 6 pm and Friday, April 16 at 5:30 pm. If you would like to attend one of these forums, please contact Mary Eadie at 716-795-3832 to reserve a spot. Please note that space is limited to 95 people due to state gathering limits. If we need to schedule additional forums, we will do so.

We thank you all for your assistance and patience with this process. Our path to this point has not been easy and we expect there to be more challenges. However, be assured that we are being thoughtful and will do the best we can for our entire learning community.

Sincerely,



Jacob Reimer
Superintendent