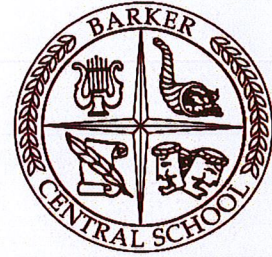


Barker Central School

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Jacob L. Reimer
Superintendent of Schools
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8/20/2021

Dear Barker Learning Community,

As the last days of summer break come to a close, we are continuing to prepare for the safe return of our students to the school buildings. As noted in the letter posted on August 4th, we will be returning to 5 days per week of in-person instruction for all of our students, PreK-12 starting on September 7th, 2021. We can't wait to see all of our students in a little more than two weeks (more specific information about the start of school will be sent early next week by Mr. Carter. Be on the lookout for that communication, as it will contain very important information).

We also noted in the August 4th letter that we expected there to be some requirements for the opening of school, including potential mask wearing. Utilizing guidance issued by the CDC and the New York State Department of Education (NYSED), the District has developed a draft framework for mask wearing and other aspects of the school day. This was developed in conjunction with other Niagara-Orleans School Districts and the Niagara County Department of Health (NCDOH).

The draft framework is included at the end of this letter. Please note that this draft is not final as the District is waiting on the change of leadership in the Governor's office as we believe the new Governor may implement additional requirements for schools. As such, the final framework will not be approved until the August 30th Board of Education meeting. It is important to understand that the framework is tiered based upon the community transmission rates. The protocols for mask wearing while in schools would remain mostly the same unless we reach the red transmission rate. As of today, we are identified as being in an orange transmission rate zone.

While this framework is not finalized yet, we wanted to point out a couple of the important pieces that we do know to be set as of today. Most importantly, at this time the only requirements for wearing masks will be while individuals are on school buses and when walking in common areas such as hallways, the cafeteria while waiting to be served, and other areas like this. Masks will continue to be recommended for all to wear anywhere on campus, but will not be required except for the instances noted previously. Additionally, masks may be worn by any individual throughout the school day, if they so choose. The only reasons the District would shift to requiring masks beyond the settings noted above would be if there is a state-wide mandate requiring masking, or if the District shifts into a red transmission zone and, after consulting with the NCDOH and the District Physician, it is determined to be needed due to local circumstances within the District.

In addition, we are happy to let you know that at this time we are planning to provide all of our extra-curricular, athletic, and other opportunities for our students and community. However, the District may need to restrict activities and events if circumstances change.

It is also important to note that the processes in place for the 2020-21 school year as they relate to potential quarantines and the ability to return to school if a student or staff is diagnosed at school will remain the same for the 2021-22 school year. If a student or staff is sent home due to exhibiting symptoms of Covid, they will be required to have a negative test/doctor note to return, or they must remain home until they complete their isolation period. It remains very important to not send your child to school if they are ill or are experiencing symptoms of COVID. All contact tracing and official quarantining will be completed by officials from the Niagara County Department of Health or the NYS Department of Health.

As always, if a change in protocols is required due to Covid, we will communicate with the entire Barker Learning Community as soon as we have complete information to pass on.

On a final note, we know the topic of masks has been, and continues to be, very emotional. The beliefs in our community vary greatly on how the District should approach this issue. Please continue to be compassionate and respectful of each other's views as they relate to masking in our schools. Every person in our community has had different experiences over the last year and a half that have shaped how they feel about masking. The respect, compassion, and tolerance we continue to show each other is what will teach our children the greatest lessons of all.

Please continue to stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,



Jacob L. Reimer

Superintendent of Schools

ORLEANS/NIAGARA REGIONAL APPROACH TO THE OPENING OF SCHOOLS
Developed in partnership with the Orleans and Niagara County Departments of Health,
Orleans/Niagara BOCES, and Regional Superintendents

	BLUE (Low Transmission) Total Cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days= 0-9	YELLOW (Moderate Transmission) Total Cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days= 10-49	ORANGE (Substantial Transmission) Total Cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days= 50-99	RED (High Transmission) Total Cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days= Greater than 100
Instructional Delivery	In-Person five days per week, 3' spacing in classrooms as practicable	In-Person five days per week, 3' spacing in classrooms as practicable	In-Person five days per week, 3' spacing in classrooms as practicable	In-Person five days per week, 3' spacing in classrooms as practicable
School Bus Masking (Including Athletics)	Mandated	Mandated	Mandated	Mandated
Common Area Masking/Transitions	Mandated	Mandated	Mandated	Mandated
Classroom Masking	Recommended	Strongly Recommended	Recommended / 3' distancing as practicable	Likely mandated per discussions with Health Departments
Cafeteria Masking	Recommended	Strongly Recommended	Recommended / 3' distancing as practicable	Mandated / 6' distancing as practicable
Physical Education Masking/Distancing	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Mandated / 6' distancing as practicable
Outdoor Masking	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended
Band and Chorus Masking/Distancing	Recommended / 3' distancing as practicable	Recommended / 3' distancing as practicable	Recommended / 3' distancing as practicable	Mandated / 6' distancing as practicable

Cleaning protocols to be maintained as in 2020/2021