



December 3, 2020

Dear Horseheads Central School District Families:

As we reported earlier this week, the state has changed the requirements for schools in the orange micro-cluster zone. We have received some guidance from the state, and our plan for a phased-in reopening is being finalized. We have worked with local and state health departments for approval of our plan to reopen orange zone schools beginning with our three PreK-4 schools.

We have been informed that schools in the orange zone are no longer required to test 100% of students and staff in the buildings prior to reopening. However, we still must test students and staff each week once schools reopen so that 20% of the in-person population in the three schools is tested for COVID-19 monthly.

Our plan is to resume hybrid instruction at Center Street, Gardner Road, and Ridge Road beginning with Cohort A on December 14. Parents/guardians of students in these three schools will receive a separate communication today with more information and the testing consent form.

Please note that we will be moving PreK-4 parent/teacher conferences to January. This means that December 15, 16, and 18 will be regular days for our grade PreK-4 schools; they will not be half days. We hope to keep the same scheduled appointment times and just reschedule the dates. We will let parents/guardians know the new date.

Parent/teacher conferences for grades 5-6 will go on as scheduled December 15, 16, and 18. These dates will be half-days for students in grades 5-6. If you have questions, please contact your school office.

As we work to reopen our PreK-4 schools to hybrid instruction, we are also working on the plan for reopening grade 5-12 schools in accordance with current state requirements. We will share this information when finalized.

We remind all families that state requirements can change at any time, as they did this week, so please continue to check your emails and listen to our district-wide phone calls for any updates. We also remind you that staffing levels affect schools' ability to remain in the hybrid format. If we are unable to staff certain classrooms or bus runs due to quarantine/isolation orders, we will need to move specific classrooms to remote instruction or cancel specific bus runs temporarily.

Thank you for your continued cooperation as we work to provide in-person learning for students and a safe learning environment for our entire school community. As always, and especially during this holiday season, we remind everyone to continue with safety precautions of wearing masks, maintaining safe distance, washing hands thoroughly and often, and avoiding unnecessary outings, large gatherings, and other contacts. This will certainly help Horseheads Schools remain open.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact your school office.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas J. Douglas
Superintendent of Schools