



Akron Central School District

In Pursuit of Excellence

*Patrick D. McCabe
Superintendent of Schools*

May 13, 2021

Dear Akron Students, Parents, Staff, and Families:

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide you with an informational update on the possible return of secondary students and to solicit your feedback through a brief survey. As you may know, the April 9th NYSDOH Interim Guidance for In-person Instruction allows for students in grades 6-12 to return to in-person learning while maintaining a distance of three feet in the classroom if certain thresholds for community transmission of COVID-19 are established. In recent weeks, the Erie County infection rate has dropped significantly and we are now on the cusp of being at or near the threshold of 100 new cases per 100,000 people. If the trajectory of these numbers continue, secondary schools will be able to return students soon.

As was the case with the return of elementary students, building and district administrators have been carefully monitoring this situation and are engaged in planning efforts in the event that we are able to have grades 6-12 students return for additional days of in-person learning. The return would mirror the elementary schedule and allow for 4 days of instruction with the continuation of a remote Wednesday. Students that participate in fully remote instruction would be allowed to do so and the hybrid model will no longer be used for the remainder of the school year.

It must be noted that Wednesdays provide an opportunity for teachers to develop meaningful instructional lessons for remote learners and meet the needs of individual students. They also allow an opportunity for our facilities department to conduct additional deep cleaning and disinfection, which we believe has contributed to our remarkable ability to control viral spread here on campus.

Throughout this year the safety and well-being of our students has been at the forefront of all decisions. In addition we have integrated teacher recommendations and have solicited parental input when developing instructional and operational plans. In order to make the best decision for Akron, building principals intend to meet with teachers over the coming days. We also request that families complete the [May 2021 Akron MS/HS Parent Survey](#) by Friday, May 14th at 8:00 p.m. so that we can have a better understanding of parent priorities and preferences. In order to inform parents of some of the impacts of this possible change, we have included information on the instructional model, transportation, and other considerations at the top of the survey.

It's important to note the timing of all of this. We have identified May 24th as a potential return date. Assuming that the infection rates reach the appropriate level and we were able to bring students back 4 days per week, High School students would have an additional 7 days of in-person learning before exams begin. Middle School students would have an additional 8 days. These additional days would afford the students greater opportunities to engage in curriculum, have direct access to teachers, and serve as a foundation for summer programming and the full return to 5 days per week this fall. Having said that, should the infection rate not permit us to return to in-person learning during the week of May 24th, we will remain in our current hybrid model for the remainder of the school year.

I wish to assure you that decisions will not be made in haste and that we are working intently and diligently to gather facts, data, and relevant information. We will share more information as quickly as possible. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and complete the survey. Your on-going support and understanding throughout this school year has been incredible and we are tremendously grateful for all that you have done in support of the students and Akron school community.

Sincerely,

Patrick D. McCabe
Superintendent of Schools