



Akron Central School District

In Pursuit of Excellence

Patrick D. McCabe
Superintendent of Schools

August 24, 2021

Dear Akron Schools Community,

District staff have been working throughout the summer in preparation for the return of students and are excited to welcome them back to school on Tuesday, September 7, 2021. We are also tremendously pleased to be able to return to a more traditional in-person instructional program and have all students here with us every day.

The purpose of this correspondence is to make you aware of important requirements and operational protocols in light of the recently released Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) Guidance for PK-12 Schools, 2021-2022. You will find that this guidance provides clarity on issues such as masking, physical distancing, contact tracing, health and safety, and surveillance testing.

We value the perspective of all members of our school community and understand that not everyone will agree with all aspects of the ECDOH guidance. It's important to note that during his press conference on August 23, 2021, County Executive Mark Poloncarz indicated that the guidance is "not a permanent document for the entire school year," but rather, one that is subject to change based on COVID-19 trends, changes in New York State Regulations, or by Executive Order.

From an instructional perspective, the guidance affords us a fair opportunity to meet the primary objective of keeping students in school for 180 days of instruction. We also believe that it will allow for instruction and student learning to be very similar to what we experienced in May and June of last year with the potential for fewer instances of quarantine through contact tracing.

Below you will find a brief synopsis of some of the information that is included in the ECDOH Guidance. However, you are encouraged to [review the entire document by clicking this link](#).

- Masking:
 - Appropriate masks are mandated at all times for all individuals while indoors, regardless of vaccination status. This includes all classroom and non-classroom settings and school buses.
 - Masks are strongly recommended but not required to be worn when outdoors.
 - Mask breaks will be provided.
- Physical Distancing:
 - Students will be spaced 3 feet apart in all classroom settings.
 - 6 feet of physical distancing is required for singing or playing a wind instrument.
- Close Contact Tracing for Quarantining:
 - Children who are within three feet and adults who are within six feet of a positive individual for fifteen minutes or more over a 24-hour period are subject to contact tracing.
 - ECDOH indicates that the number of days to quarantine will depend on exposure date and symptoms.
 - Individuals who are fully vaccinated are not subject to quarantine.

- Daily Health Monitoring
 - We will follow the same procedure as last year. All individuals entering the building must complete the daily health screening and temperature check. We will use the same entrances as last year. [Please refer to our District's Arrival and Dismissal Procedures.](#) Students will have a temperature check before boarding the school bus.
 - We are looking for ways to make the home-based daily screening more parent/child friendly and easier to use. Details will be provided in the near future.
- Health and Safety:
 - Ventilation systems will be maximized for fresh air circulation and the highest rated filters for the air handling units have been installed. Bus windows will be open whenever safe and possible.
 - All areas will be cleaned daily and a disinfectant process will be employed in any area known to have had a positive individual present.
- COVID-19 Screening and Testing
 - The District is working with the ECDOH to provide free COVID-19 screening testing on campus for any employee or student who would like to participate (with family permission).
 - The testing will be a saliva test (oral swab) and results are available in 24 hours or less.
 - More details including the signup process will be forthcoming.

I know that the continued Covid-19 pandemic and associated safety protocols are something we all hoped would be behind us at the start of this school year. Yet, we remain committed to advancing the achievement and enjoyment of our students while keeping them and all staff members safe and healthy. Together we must focus on learning and providing our students with the best educational experience possible in these challenging times.

We will continue to keep you informed of developments in the coming days and weeks as well as throughout the school year.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Sincerely,
Patrick D. McCabe