

NORTH TONAWANDA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
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Gregory J. Woytila
Superintendent of Schools

Dear North Tonawanda Families:

We are excited to announce that on April 9th, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) released new COVID-19 guidance for schools. These changes allow for an increased capacity for in-person instruction by reducing social distancing from six feet to three-feet in the classroom. The attached PowerPoint slides outline the key change(s) to the district's plan for an expansion of in-person instruction in response to the NYSDOH guidance. Safety continues to be our number one focus. We will continue to do everything possible to provide a safe and secure learning environment for your children.

The NTCSD's revised reopening plan expands the in-person instruction to 4-days of in-person instruction that includes all elementary students grades PreK-6. This revised plan will allow the district to automatically bring back all of our current PreK-3 hybrid students for 4 days of in-person instruction effective **Monday, April 26, 2021**, and grades 4-6 will begin on **Monday, May 3, 2021**.

Appropriate physical distancing and mask wearing will be maintained between individuals while in school facilities and on school grounds, inclusive of students, faculty, staff, and visitors unless safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance or individuals are of the same household. There will be a minimum of three (3) feet between students in classroom settings. CDC also provides recommendations for physical distancing and cohorting for elementary, middle, and high schools at each level of transmission. These recommendations are summarized below and are required to be adhered to when implementing physical distancing of less than six (6) feet in classrooms.

- In counties with low and moderate risk of transmission, elementary, middle, and high schools can maintain physical distancing of at least three (3) feet between students in classrooms.
- In counties with substantial risk of transmission, elementary, middle, and high schools can maintain physical distancing of at least three (3) feet between students in classrooms and cohorting is recommended when possible.
- In counties with high risk of transmission, elementary schools can maintain physical distancing of at least three (3) feet between students in classrooms and cohorting is recommended when possible. However, in middle and high schools three feet between students in classrooms is recommended only when schools can use cohorting. When schools cannot maintain cohorting, middle and high schools must maintain physical distancing of at least six feet between students in classrooms.

With respect to our middle and high school students (grades 7 - 12), the District is unable to offer full-time, in-person learning at this time due to the community transmission criteria that is outlined in the CDC and NYSDOH guidance, of which places Niagara County in a "high transmission" area. As a result, the NYSDOH specifically requires that middle and high school students maintain six feet of social distance unless the students can be cohorted. Due to the unique nature of student schedules, as well as space constraints, the district will not be able to return more students to NTMS or NTHS on a full-time basis while maintaining six feet of social distance.

There are exceptions where a minimum of six (6) feet of distance must still be maintained. Schools are responsible for ensuring that a distance of six (6) feet in all directions is maintained between individuals during the situations set forth below.

- Six feet is always the required distancing between adults (teachers, staff, visitors) and between students and adults.
- Six feet of distance is required when eating meals or snacks, or drinking, or other times masks must be removed. This may mean that meals cannot be eaten in classrooms that have been converted to three feet of physical distance during instruction time.
- Individuals participating in activities that require projecting the voice (e.g., singing) or playing a wind instrument must be six feet apart and there must be six feet of distance between the performers and the audience during performances and concerts.
- Six feet of physical distance must be maintained in common areas and outside of classrooms (e.g. lobbies, auditoriums, gymnasiums, cafeterias, and hallways), where possible.
- Athletics will comply with the Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (March 25, 2021) guidance.
- Additionally, as we transition to the spring, there will be increased opportunities for instruction to occur outside and/or for windows to be open for increased ventilation.

The decrease in physical distancing to three feet, coupled with the current contact tracing protocols (i.e., close contact, per NCDOH, is defined as being in contact with someone closer than 6 feet for more than 10 minutes) could result in the quarantining of additional students. As we have strictly adhered to local and state protocols all year, we must continue to screen and monitor our staff and students closely as we transition on April 26th.

Screening & Protocols

Parents and all NTCSD personnel will continue to subscribe to health screening on a daily basis. All students will continue to have their temperature monitored via temperature scanners as they enter the building. If a student has a fever, or if they exhibit any COVID symptoms, they will be isolated and sent to the nurse for a checkup. The nurse will determine if the child is symptomatic and needs to be sent home. Any individual who screens positive for COVID-19 exposure or symptoms, if screened at the school, must be immediately sent home with instructions to contact their health care provider for assessment and/or testing.

- Students who are being sent home because of a positive screen (e.g., onset of COVID-19 symptoms) must be immediately separated from other students and supervised until their parent/legal guardian or emergency contact can retrieve them from school.
- The district must immediately notify the local health department about the case if diagnostic test results are positive for COVID-19.

One of the three following criteria must be met before the student/staff can return to school:

- A note from the student/staff's medical care provider with an alternative diagnosis is provided, OR
- The result of a negative diagnostic COVID-19 test is provided, OR
- There have been at least ten days since the onset of COVID-19 symptoms.

Vaccination, Previous COVID Infection

In New York State, P-12 Teachers and staff have been eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine since January 11, 2021. Asymptomatic fully vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine if exposed to COVID-19. Person who received the full vaccine series of an FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine and is (1) exposed to an individual who has tested COVID-19 positive or (2) traveled to a U.S. state other than those contiguous to New York and remains asymptomatic will not have to quarantine under the criteria below.

Additionally, a person who completed 10 days of isolation for a COVID-19 infection and remains asymptomatic will not have to quarantine under the criteria below.

Quarantine Guidance for Fully Vaccinated Persons: Fully vaccinated persons exposed to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 OR who traveled to a U.S. state other than those contiguous to New York are not required to quarantine if they meet all of the following criteria:

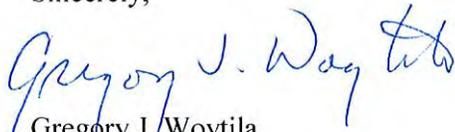
- Fully vaccinated (i.e., ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine), AND
- Within 90 days of the receipt of the last dose in the vaccination series AND
- Remains asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure or vaccination series completion.

Asymptomatic individuals who have recovered from laboratory confirmed COVID-19 infection during the previous 3 months do not need to be quarantined if exposed to COVID-19.

Please view our FAQ, for additional common questions specific to these changes.

It is very exciting to welcome our Pre-K-grade children back to full time in-person instruction, but we need to accomplish this task with safety of the students and staff as our number one concern. With your patience and assistance, we can accomplish this for our children.

Sincerely,



Gregory J. Woytila
Superintendent of Schools

"Building the future today"

North Tonawanda City School District

“SIX TO THREE” RETURN PLAN

April 15, 2021

“Six to Three” Return Plan

- All current K-6 hybrid students (M/Tu and Th/Fr) will become four day students. We will continue a four day (M, Tu, Th, F) schedule.
- Synchronous/Asynchronous instruction will continue on Wednesdays.
- Individual schools will assess space considerations to include classroom size, bathrooms, cafeterias, music rooms, and physical education space with respect to maintaining three feet of social distance.
 - Six feet of distance must be maintained when students are not wearing a mask, including eating, drinking and playing a wind instrument. (This may mean that meals cannot be eaten in classrooms that have been converted to three feet of physical distance during instruction time)
- We are a universal mask school district, unless on an approved mask break or while eating/drinking.
- Current hybrid students being bussed will change from 2 to 4 days.
- Infection rates must be closely monitored. At this point, grades 7-12 will remain in their current status. Infection rates will continue to be monitored (100 cases of 100,000 people means “high transmission” and 7-12 students must stay 6 feet apart unless cohorting can occur).

“Six to Three” Return Plan (cont.)

- PreK-6 students will be invited first to return based on parent response to survey.
- Any student whose parent does not wish their child to attend four days will be placed on full remote instruction.
- Outside spaces should be used as frequently as possible.
- Isolation Rooms must continue.
- Outside groups will be approved on a case-by-case basis.
- Current fully remote students will remain on remote instruction.
- The daily survey and temp checks will continue for staff.

“Six to Three” Return Plan (cont.)

- The plan will begin on April 26, 2021 for PreK-3 students. Grades 4-6 will begin on May 3, 2021.
- The Superintendent will communicate this plan to the community and the administrators will make school based determinations on bathrooms, classrooms, and cafeterias.
- A public forum will be virtually conducted on Wednesday, April 21st via regularly scheduled FB Live Event.
- Presentation was made to the Board of Education on April 14th.
- Virtual Q&A with K-6 district stakeholders and superintendent on April 21, 2021 at 8:30 AM via Teams
- The plan will be shared with the Niagara County Department of Health. It will be posted on our website at www.ntschoools.org.