



Akron Central School District

In Pursuit of Excellence

Patrick D. McCabe
Superintendent of Schools

September 26, 2021

Dear Akron High School Students, Parents and Staff:

Apart from your own families, Akron Central Schools are the center of student life. It is where students come to acquire an education, build relationships, participate in sports, exercise, experience the visual and performing arts, be provided with balanced nutrition, utilize technology, and find support for social and emotional health. The consequences of interruptions to school are significant. For well over a year, ACS has proved that the preventative measures that we have in place allow students to be safe in school. There may be no other area of student life that has more safety protocols in place than within our buildings. We have been successful in mitigating the spread of the coronavirus between students and staff because of the consistent implementation of the array of safety measures that we have in place.

The purpose of this correspondence is to make you aware of how the District is working aggressively to respond to the recent cases of COVID-19 and overcome the challenges we have faced in the last week. I ask that you read the information below carefully and assist us in fighting to keep our schools open and our extracurricular programs going. The hope and optimism that we all held at the start of the school year must now be reinforced by acts of self-discipline and a collective resolve to do all that we can to maintain in person learning.

In light of the significant number of anticipated quarantine orders and under the recommendation of the Erie County Department of Health, we had little choice but to make the decision to transition to remote learning for five days of instruction at the High School last Wednesday evening. The following day, and without warning, the ECDOH abandoned its guidance plan (and quarantine requirements) for schools in favor of the [New York State Department of Health Guidance](#) for classroom instruction.

Under the NYSDOH guidance, and unlike the ECDOH guidance, there is no provision to quarantine an entire classroom or bus if there are 2 or more positive cases of COVID-19 detected over a 10 day period. This change in quarantine requirements allows us to return to in person learning at the High School sooner than we had initially planned. However, I must be clear. While we are very happy that we can bring the children back to school sooner, there is work that we all must do to ensure that we are able to mitigate the spread of the virus in school, keep students and staff safe, and maintain in person learning.

In person learning will resume at the High School on Wednesday, September 29, 2021. Any student that was notified by the ECDOH or school nurse to isolate or quarantine must continue to do so until they have reached their individual designated return date.

Monday and Tuesday are required days of attendance and virtual learning will be provided with the normal schedule being followed. Please read on to understand why.

We are taking the following steps to combat the spread of the virus and monitor our situation:

- Monday and Tuesday will be used to perform a deep cleaning and disinfection of the building.
- Cafeteria spaces will be modified and additional spaces will be used in order to keep students the recommended 6 feet or more apart while eating.
- A new COVID-19 case dashboard will be posted on the website. [Please click this link to view it](#). This tool increases transparency and will help us monitor the rate of COVID-19 spread in schools. Please note the number of new positive cases that were reported late last week and work with us to reverse this trend.
- As was explained in [my letter from Friday, September 24th](#), we have partnered with the ECDOH to offer free screening and proximal testing to any student or staff member that would like to participate. This strategy will aid in early detection.
- We will encourage and reinforce the message to students, staff and visitors to follow all mitigation strategies such as wearing a mask, practicing frequent hand washing, maintaining appropriate social distancing, and staying home if experiencing COVID-19 like symptoms.
- We are working with a third party vendor to offer weekly COVID-19 tests to those employees that are required to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test pursuant to [10 NYCRR 2.62](#)
- We are asking everyone (parents, students and staff) to understand that many of the symptoms may initially be mild. However, take precautions and don't come to school or work if you are not feeling well.
- Finally, we know that schools are safe and that in person learning can be maintained as long as we have staff and students that are able to be here daily. Please take precautions and do what you can, both in and out of school, to help stop the spread of this terrible virus.

Every person in our school community is valued. That includes our students, staff, parents, guardians and other family members. As a community, we have an obligation to contribute to the well-being of our neighbor. One of the great things about our District is that this actually happens on a daily basis. My intention is to simply reinforce that message and thank you for doing your part to make our schools and classrooms safe and wonderful places to be.

Sincerely,

Patrick D. McCabe
Superintendent of Schools