



Akron Central School District

In Pursuit of Excellence

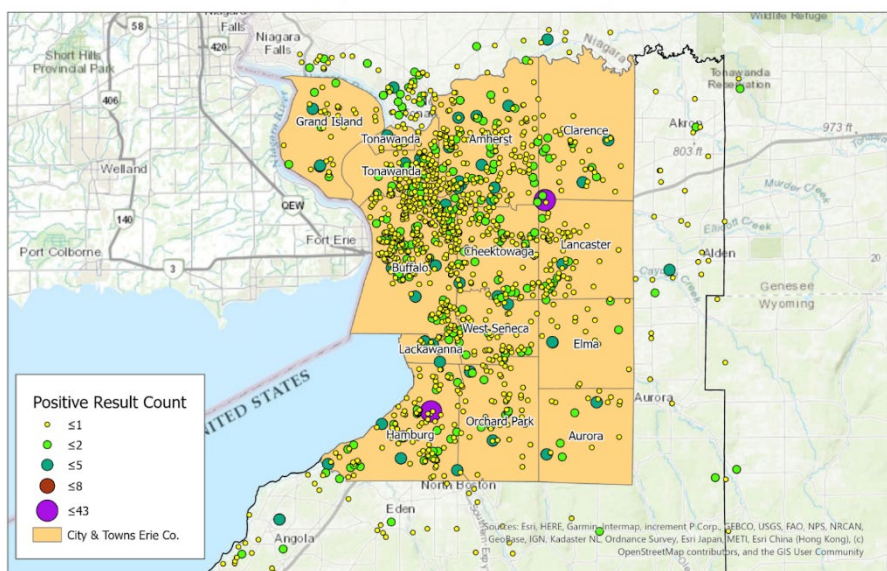
Patrick D. McCabe
Superintendent of Schools

November 10, 2020

Dear Akron CSD Parents and Guardians:

This past weekend, The WNY daily positive rate rose to 4.8% and on Saturday, the Erie County daily positive rate was 6.3% with a 7-day rolling average of 4.5%. In response, on November 9, 2020, Governor Cuomo announced that most of Erie County has been designated as yellow-level micro-cluster zones due to increases in COVID-19 cases. The map below shows geographic areas that are impacted. Currently Akron does not fall into the Yellow Zone. However, based on the data trend and the proximity to areas with increasing cases, it seems probable that ACS may fall into one of these zones at some point in the near future.

Cluster Action Initiative (ZipCode Determination) - Erie



Cases where case test date = 10/31/2020 - 11/07/2020
NYSDOH
Pre-discussion, confidential

Key precautionary requirements in a Yellow Zone include:

- Houses of Worship: 50 percent capacity
- Mass Gatherings: 25 people maximum, indoor and outdoor
- Businesses: Open
- Dining: Indoor and outdoor dining, 4 person maximum per table
- Schools: Open with mandatory weekly testing of students and teachers/staff for in-person settings.

Over the past 24 hours some information on how schools must respond to being in a Yellow Zone have been revealed but there is still much more that needs to be known. We are working hard to gather information, consider the many variables that will impact our ability to deliver our educational programming and ultimately determine the best course of action for the students, families and staff of Akron.

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What we do know:

- Schools that are in a designated Yellow Zone are required to test 20% of the combined total of onsite students and staff each week.
- Fully remote students and staff who do not come on campus are exempt from the testing.
- The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) will partner with the Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) to provide free shallow nasal swab test kits to school districts.
- Additional expenses related to COVID-19 testing such as personnel, reporting, and facilities must be paid by the school district.
- Due to the widespread infection throughout the region, the ECDOH is unable to support schools in the administration of the tests. However, they will continue to provide support with reporting and contact tracing.

What we are waiting to learn:

- Are there tests available?
- When would the testing have to begin?
- Who will administer the testing?
- How long does the application to become a testing site take?
- What happens when a parent refuses to give consent for their child to be tested?
- What happens if a staff member refuses to take a test?
- How will it be determined what students and staff will be tested on what day/week?
- What are the ramifications if we do not get to 20% tested in any given week?
- What does the reporting/administrative component entail?
- Does testing have to occur on-site?

These are just some of the questions that we are seeking answers to. I want to assure you that we will do everything in our power to find the answers to these and other questions. We intend to be transparent about the decision making process and will follow the best course of action for Akron based on our unique set of circumstances. Much more will be known over the coming days and we will continue to work with the local health agencies, our insurance carrier, and district staff. To reiterate, currently we are: NOT in a Yellow Zone and we are NOT required to test 20% students and staff for COVID-19. We are also NOT making a decision to pivot to our remote learning model at this time. However, we are planning for both of those scenarios. Working together, teachers and administrators are updating and finalizing our plan for a fully remote instructional model. More information on this will be shared with you next week. It is our intent to provide a consistent and engaging learning experience for all students while also recognizing the inherent challenges faced by students and families during periods of remote instruction.

It should be noted that both the County Executive and the Commissioner of the ECDH have pointed out the fact that schools have done a tremendous job in controlling the spread of COVID-19. This has been accomplished through the partnership between school and home. The daily health screenings done at home and the health and safety protocols that are being followed here in school are critically important. I encourage everyone to exercise these same protocols outside of school so that we mitigate the spread of the virus in our communities. By working together, we can help to keep our schools open and our loved ones safe.

We will continue to provide you with updates over the coming days and weeks.

Stay well and safe.

Sincerely,

Patrick D. McCabe
Superintendent of Schools

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