



## Lansingburgh Central School District

District Office

55 New Turnpike Rd • Troy, NY 12182

Dr. Antonio W. Abitabile, Ed.D.

Superintendent

(518) 233-6850

January 4, 2021

Lansingburgh School Community,

Happy New Year! I hope you and your family had a safe and healthy holiday recess. Welcome back to the second half of the 2020-21 school year. As the saying goes, "Hindsight is 2020" and I sincerely hope that is the case for last year and that we are able to restore some type of pre-pandemic normalcy in 2021.

Throughout the break, we have been monitoring the pandemic and have been in contact with the Rensselaer County Department of Health, other school districts in our BOCES (Columbia, Greene & Rensselaer Counties), and school districts in the Capital Region, regarding our ability to reopen schools safely. Yesterday morning, superintendents from our BOCES met with DOH officials to assess the situation and made the determination that in person/hybrid teaching and learning would resume as scheduled. While there were some rumors about Albany County schools all moving to remote instruction starting today, that never occurred and the schools that are remote did so on their own volition.

We do have a couple of updates that I wanted to share with all of you:

### Zone Designation

While our 7 day positivity rate in Rensselaer County continues to climb, reaching double digits on January 2nd (highest average since May 2nd), there still has not been any communication that our region will be designated as a cluster zone.

### Screening Tests

If, for some reason, our district is designated, students and staff COVID-19 testing would need to occur at Turnpike Elementary School, only, so it can remain open to in-person instruction. At this time, we are still a little shy of having the required 20% consent to COVID Testing for students to remain open. If you have not opted in for student testing and would like to, please take a moment to complete the form here:

[Consent for Student COVID-19 Testing Form](#). We are prepared with the 20% of staff that is required to test, should we get to that point.

School nurses and several staff members have been certified to administer testing and procedures are being implemented at Turnpike this week, thanks to assistance from Questar III.

### Vaccines

We learned yesterday from the DOH that school nurses, along with any other school staff that will aid in testing, have now been moved to Phase 1A and will be amongst the first to get the first round of the vaccination. This could be as soon as early next week. Remaining district staff (all staff, not just teachers) are in Phase 1B and could have the vaccine available to them in two weeks. We are still awaiting further guidance from the Rensselaer County DOH for specifics on the vaccination pods that need to be created

and will share that out with staff as it becomes available to us. Staff members will receive a survey in the near future asking them if they would like to receive the vaccine.

#### Reopening

Rensselaer Park, Knickerbacker Middle School and the High School will remain remote while we await further guidance from the state in regards to our state aid payments and continue to monitor the pandemic and vaccination timeline. Both of which still carry much uncertainty.

#### Budget

Governor Cuomo mentioned in December that he is waiting to see if any federal assistance is available and, based on that amount, will withhold the remaining balance in March/April to close out the fiscal year. In March, we receive the highest amount of state aid compared to any other month, around 40% of our overall annual allotment.

Also, the Governor's Executive Budget proposal for 2021-22 is due on February 1st. This gives us a preliminary indicator of our budget situation for next school year, allowing us to plan more accurately for what remains of this school year. Interestingly enough, by February 1st, we will know more about next year's state aid than we will about this year's.

I wanted to thank all of you for your continued cooperation and support that you have provided throughout the past months. Your resilience, flexibility and patience are unparalleled and I hope that will continue through these challenging times.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. W. Abitabile', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr. Antonio W. Abitabile, Ed. D.  
LCSD Superintendent