

October 7, 2020

Dear OA School Community,

I wanted to take a moment to highlight some of the great work happening in our district and to keep the community updated on some important items as we move further into the school year. This past summer, with the support of several stakeholders including school board members, teachers, support staff, administration, parents and students, a great deal of time was spent putting together a solid plan for the way our district would provide instruction to students both in-person and virtually. I have been so impressed with how this plan of synchronous instruction has been implemented over the first few weeks of school.



We are already seeing the benefit of our synchronous instruction model in a variety of ways. We have had different scenarios already play out involving students or staff needing to be out of the building and still being able to participate fully with class instruction. In these cases, students having the ability to connect and engage with their teacher and classmates without missing a beat is essential not only for their learning but their overall social emotional well-being.

With the rise in numbers for Tioga and surrounding counties, we have begun to see students and staff who are in need of being quarantined due to COVID exposure or symptoms related to COVID. Our first positive COVID notification required the teacher and the students in the classroom to be quarantined for fourteen (14) days. The entire class transitioned from in-person learning to remote learning in one afternoon, and with minor interruptions, have been able to successfully hold class each day since. The support and flexibility of all staff, students, and families is what makes this possible.

Our teachers have done a great job during the first few weeks of the school year preparing students for this transition to an entirely remote model knowing that it could happen at any time. We see what is happening in other school districts and we continue to monitor the information from Tioga and neighboring counties. It might be for a day, a week, or longer, but our instructional plan was created to seamlessly transition to a completely remote model if and when needed.

Things to know in the event a building in our district, or our entire district, were to transition to fully remote learning:

- Class Zoom link(s) and the daily schedule are available on your child's learning platform (Google Classroom or Schoology) as communicated by your child's teacher. If you are uncertain where this information is, I encourage you to reach out to your child's teacher for clarification and details.
- Students at all grade levels will follow their daily schedule to continue to receive live instruction. (This may look different based on grade level, but the students will be engaged in school during their regularly scheduled school day.)
- Attendance will continue to be taken daily and instruction, class work, and grading will continue.
- Special Education and Related Services will be provided virtually.
- Operation of BOCES programs will differ depending on the program, location and the status of Broome-Tioga BOCES in general. This will be communicated to those affected.
- Food Services will continue to provide daily meals. Specific details on pick-up or delivery will be provided if/when a change to fully remote occurs.

I would like to give a huge thank you to those committee members and our entire staff for making this instructional model be the least disruptive for kids. I am witnessing a highly effective model for student-school connections, social-emotional wellbeing and learning. I certainly understand that none of this is easy (we knew it wouldn't be) and we will continue to make adjustments when needed and when possible. Our teaching staff continues to collaborate, sharing best practices and figuring out ways to continue to meet our students' needs as every scenario is unique.

Please take a moment to share your thoughts on how the experience of your instructional choice (In-person/Hybrid or Fully Remote) has been so far this school year. Participate in our latest ThoughtExchange: <https://my.thoughtexchange.com/724504603>

Governor Cuomo spoke yesterday about the growing COVID clusters around the State. These clusters, like in Broome County, will be labeled as either Yellow, Orange or Red Zones. We are closely watching the information out of Broome County after seeing some of the Binghamton area designated as a "Yellow Zone". We are waiting on specific details on how the zoning will affect school districts in the areas of mandatory testing and the move to remote learning, as mentioned in the Governor's press conference. Once we get more information on how this affects OACSD, we will let you know.

To follow up and echo the recent messages out of the Health Department, we cannot emphasize enough that parents, students, staff, and community members need to be just as vigilant following guidelines outside of school. This includes limiting group gatherings, practicing good hygiene, wearing masks and following social distancing guidelines. Please continue to monitor the health of your child(ren), fill out the daily wellness check on the SchoolPass App, and please do not send your child to school sick. If you suspect that you, your child, or someone in your family has been potentially exposed to COVID-19, please contact your healthcare provider. The health and safety of our students, staff, families, and the entire community will always be our priority in every decision we make.

OA Together,



Corey