

# Cheektowaga-Sloan Union Free School District

Mrs. Andrea L. Galenski  
Superintendent of Schools  
(716) 891-6402



**Board of Education**  
Denise McCowan - President  
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Zachary Smith  
Jeffery Stewart

April 12, 2021

Dear Cheektowaga-Sloan Parent and/or Guardian,

Late Friday evening, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) announced new COVID-19 guidance for schools, allowing for increased capacity for in-person instruction by reducing social distancing under certain conditions set forth in the *Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Global Health Emergency*.

You can read the updated guidance, which can also be found on the District's webpage, here: [Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Global Health Emergency](#)

## Elementary Schools

Based on the new guidance, which includes allowing school districts to reduce the existing six-foot social distancing requirements in classrooms to three feet, we anticipate being able to bring our PreK-5 elementary students back to additional in-person days per week. At this time, we anticipate shifting to in-person instruction four days per week. Under this approach, the current Wednesday all-remote model would remain the same.

## Middle & High Schools

It is important to note that on pages 7, 8, and 22, the guidance details specific conditions by which social distancing is determined. At this time, due to the **"High Rate of Transmission" in Erie County** and pursuant to the guidance set forth by the NYSDOH, our middle and high school are still required to maintain six feet of social distancing and **will not** be able to return to full-time, in-person instruction. If our region reaches the benchmark set by the NYSDOH for a lower transmission rate, we are prepared to respond accordingly so that students at JFK Middle and High School can return to full-time, in-person learning for four days per week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday).

## Remote Wednesdays

We have put great thought into the matter and want to express to our families how important remote Wednesdays are for us here in our District during this COVID period. Each Wednesday, our teachers and staff are able to meet the needs of both our in-person students as well as those

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who are learning remotely. Our teachers, who teach both our in-person and remote learners, find this day to be extremely valuable especially since all learners are brought together on this day to learn together. Our support staff also values this day as a time to meet the social and emotional needs of all students despite their learning model. Another important factor **in** maintaining our current Wednesday schedule plan is that it will allow us to maintain our deep cleaning and disinfecting procedures on all Wednesdays, which we believe has contributed to the small percentage of COVID-19 cases that we have had since September 2020.

## Ongoing Preparations

As you can imagine, there are many variables to consider as we prepare to expand our in-person instruction. In addition to students and parents, this change involves teachers, staff and administrators from all departments in our District working together to re-organize and thoughtfully plan for this new instructional model. For example, we need to safely prepare our classrooms for additional students returning, we need to work with First Student regarding transportation needs\*, and we need to collect information from our families to ensure we make the proper schedule changes and inform all families of such changes.

Our ***anticipated date*** to welcome students back to four day per week in-person learning is **Monday, April 26, 2021**. We will remain in communication with all families to keep you informed about our confirmed return date. We must ensure that everything is safely prepared and that we meet all of the requirements set forth by the NYSDOH, CDC and NYSED. As always, we appreciate your ongoing partnership and understanding during this unique time for everyone.

\* If at all possible, we are asking for your help in transporting your child to and from school so that we are able to comply with distancing requirements and maintain safety measures on our busses.

## Community Meeting

We want to ensure that our teachers, staff, parents, and other interested community members have an opportunity, as they did this past summer, to ask any questions or provide input regarding our revised reopening plan. The District will be holding a virtual meeting via Zoom on **Thursday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 p.m.** Login information will be available on the District website on Wednesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>.

So that we can most effectively address all concerns at this meeting, please email any comments or questions to [questions@cheektowagasloan.org](mailto:questions@cheektowagasloan.org) by **1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>**.

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## Parent Survey

In order to assist us with our planning, we are asking **all parents** to complete the required survey below for each of your children that indicates your instructional model preference. Please select either full-time in-person learning for four days per week **or** our 100% remote learning option, which will remain available. Even though we could currently only bring our PreK-5 elementary students back for additional in-person learning days, we are asking that **all parents** complete this survey to help us prepare in the event that we are able to bring our middle and high school students back at a later date should the transmission rate meet the requirements set forth in the NYSDOH guidance.

The survey can be accessed at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3szFqsc>

To help us move forward in the process, please complete a separate survey for each of your children as soon as possible, and no later than **Friday, April 16, 2021, at 1:00 p.m.**

It is important for me to express again how appreciative we are for the strong partnership that we have had with all families throughout this challenging time. We have wanted nothing more than to bring all students back to full-time in-person learning. Given the continued risks of COVID-19 as well as the newest guidance that we are required to follow, we are pleased to be able to consider this substantial change at the elementary level to full-time, in-person learning for four days per week. It is continued progress toward a full return to in-person learning, which we all hope will be accomplished in the near future.

As always, please reach out directly to your child's Building Principal, or any of us here, with any day-to-day questions that you may have. We are here to work with all of our families to best meet the needs of all students.

Sincerely,

Andrea L. Galenski  
Superintendent of Schools