

PINE PLAINS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Parents and Guardians:

I am writing to update you on the status of our schools in Pine Plains. The question asked of me most frequently, is when will we be able to have all of our students attend classes in-person? No one wants to have our students back in school more than I do. However, we are required to follow the rules set forth by the Centers for Disease Control, the NY State Health Department and most importantly, the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health.

We have been monitoring the CDC for changes in their guidance. The district also has consistent contact with the Dutchess County Health Department. We are exploring options that we can do to make it safe to relax the requirements for social distancing, currently six feet in all directions. Our students, as well as those in other districts, have been excellent in wearing face coverings. They have also been very good about frequent hand washing. In fact, there have been no cases of COVID transmission in the Pine Plains Schools. All of these factors are important in our making the request for flexibility. We will continue to advocate for more in-person learning and will certainly let you know well in advance of any changes.

On the topic of face coverings, the CDC has issued additional recommendations for face coverings. They are recommending that masks be worn snugly to the face or double mask for maximum protection. The majority of our students wear their face coverings properly, but the recommendations are good to keep in mind.

Our interscholastic athletic program is now in progress under the very strict rules of New York State and Section IX. As I write this letter, our boys' and girls' basketball teams open their season tonight. As you know, for this season, spectators are not allowed, but games will be broadcast. Please contact our athletic office for information on how to subscribe to the livestream of those games.

Our staff continues to look for vaccination appointments for the COVID vaccine. This is important for us to keep our school programs operating. The major cause of having to move programs to full-remote learning has been the need for our staff to be in quarantine. Once a staff member receives both vaccinations, and fourteen days after receiving the second dose, quarantine is no longer required if the individual does not exhibit any symptoms. This will help us tremendously in keeping our schools staffed.

Once again, we are doing everything that we can to expand the in-person learning for our students. I understand the frustration of the slow progress, but I ask for your patience for a little while longer.

As always, be well and stay safe.

Dr. Martin Handler
Superintendent