

PINE PLAINS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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May 26, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Today, I am writing about two current issues facing our schools as we work toward a normal situation for our students and staff.

First, on the subject of masks. The NY State Department of Health has made it clear that the requirement for all staff and students to wear a face covering has not changed. The only exceptions are during eating and for brief “mask breaks”. I understand that there are parents strongly advocating for this requirement to be relaxed, especially for our youngest students. Regardless of my own opinion on the subject, as long as the Department of Health mandates the face coverings, we will comply. The moment the mandate is changed, we will be happy to make that adjustment.

The mask mandate for student athletes and spectators at athletic events remains as well. We have requested that this requirement be reconsidered, but thus far, it remains in force.

I have been asked what September will look like for schools. The Governor has indicated that he expects schools to be 100 percent in-person in the fall. He also promised specific rules for the reopening. We certainly hope that those new regulations come in time for us to make the necessary plans for the fall.

It is likely that the amount of flexibility we will be given will depend on the rate of infection and the percentage of the population that has been vaccinated. We just held our third vaccination clinic at the high school last weekend. First, let me thank the thirty volunteers who gave up a Sunday morning so we could host the clinic. These volunteers included students, staff, retirees and community members. We were able to offer the Pfizer vaccine to approximately 150 people for a first dose and about 135 people received their second doses. Unfortunately, we had over 100 appointments that were “no shows”. We certainly hope that those individuals were able to get their vaccinations elsewhere. Our final clinic will be held on June 13th for those individuals receiving second doses.

We do not plan to hold any further clinics unless there is community demand to do so. We will continue to share the appointment links to other clinics as we learn of them.

I would like to conclude with some final thoughts. Frankly, like most people I am tired of dealing with the effects of the pandemic. Having to observe the many restrictions imposed on us have made many frustrated and often angry. I certainly understand and look forward to the day that we can focus on the education of our students first and foremost.

As always, be well and stay safe.

Dr. Martin D. Handler
Superintendent