

Oneonta City School District

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Tom Brindley
Superintendent

July 17th, 2020

Dear Yellowjacket Families:

I truly hope that you and your families are enjoying a safe and healthy summer. It is hard to believe that thoughts of the fall are upon us! I am writing to share developments regarding the opening of the 2020-2021 school year. Just this week, considerable information was released from the New York State Department of Health, the New York State Board of Regents, Governor Cuomo, and the New York State Department of Education, that will inform and guide our plans for September.

On Monday, July 13, Governor Cuomo shared the threshold criteria that will be used for reopening schools in New York State. He announced that this formula will be used to make a final decision on the reopening of schools in each region of the state. He shared that we should expect **this decision sometime between August 1st -7th**.

New York State's school reopening decisions will be made using these criteria:

- **Open:** Schools can open in a region in Phase 4 of the State's reopening designation where there is an infection rate at or below 5 percent (14-day average)
- **Close:** Schools will close if the regional infection rate rises above 9 percent (7-day average)

Through information gleaned through our assorted reopening subcommittees, parent/guardian surveys, as well as information from our respective departments of health, the OCSD has been contemplating reopening plans for weeks now. However, with the release of guidance from the Department of Health and the State Education Department this week, we are able to move forward with the planning process. Governor Cuomo announced that schools are required to submit their plans by July 31, 2020. Paramount in our reopening plan is the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff.

Contained within the 144 pages of information in the State Education Department's reopening guidance are numerous requirements that will define what schools must do to reopen, I wanted to share your feedback from the reopening survey that so very many of you responded to recently. First, I thank you for your responses to the telephone survey, others to the web survey, and the very many emails and telephone calls that you made to me. I am grateful for your responses as they provided me with great insight. Between all of the methods of survey response, we received 883 responses. The Parent/Guardian survey revealed that 37% of the respondents indicated being in favor of a full reopening with safety precautions in place, 32% in favor of a hybrid, and 31% in favor of remaining in the home learning environment.

In closing, please continue to visit our District homepage located at: www.oneontacsd.org as we will continue to share any reopening updates as our reopening plan unfolds. I know that many of you are surveyed out, but shortly you will be asked to participate in one more that will be most helpful in our planning process. We will also utilize our School



Messenger system to send emails, text messages and phone calls (as needed) to keep you all informed. PLEASE, do not hesitate to call or email me as well.

For now, very best wishes to you all and thank you for your patience and understanding as we work to bring our students and faculty back to school safely.

Sincerely,

Tom Brindley

Superintendent of Schools