

January 4, 2021

Dear Taconic Hills Families,

As we return from the break, we want to thank you for the cooperation and support that you have provided throughout the past few months. We greatly appreciate the resilience, flexibility and patience you continue to show as we navigate education during a global pandemic.

Governor Cuomo presented his Micro Cluster Strategy regarding color coded zones for schools and we need to take steps to prepare our district if we enter one of these zones. In order for our schools to remain open, the District would be required to test specific percentages of in-person students, teachers, and staff for COVID-19 if the school is in a designated Yellow, Orange, or Red Zone. **It is important to note that Taconic Hills is NOT currently in one of these zones.** We are however working with the county and Questar III BOCES to be ready if any part of our community is identified. Governor Cuomo recently announced updated zone designation metrics which are listed below for your reference:

- **Yellow Zone** is a geographic area (zip code, census tract, etc.) with a 3% positivity rate over the past 10 days AND the cluster is in top 10% for hospital admissions per capita over the past week and week-over-week growth in daily admissions.
- **Orange Zone** is a geographic area (zip code, census tract, etc.) with 4% positivity rate over the past 10 days AND 85% hospital capacity OR the Department of Health determines unacceptably high rate of hospital admissions.
- **Red Zone** is a geographic area (zip code, census tract, etc.) that is 21 days from 90% hospital capacity.

To help us prepare for testing should our area be designated in a color zone, please review the [School-Based Testing Information and Frequently Asked Questions](#) on our website and consider giving consent for school-based COVID-19 testing by filling out the **School COVID-19 Testing Consent Form** that is being sent home with your student. If you do not receive a copy, you can print it off the school website or contact your school office and request a copy.

If you consent, your child may be randomly selected to receive a free COVID-19 Rapid Test. Students who are learning 100% virtually do not need to fill out this form. Please note that these tests are non-invasive and are **not** the deep-swab procedures performed at medical facilities.

Testing is not mandatory, however, if we do not receive consent from enough families to hit the required percentage, we would likely be forced to shift to full remote instruction for students in grades K-12 for the period of time that our region is classified as a yellow, orange or red zone.

We will keep you informed of any developments and plans for state-mandated COVID-19 testing at our schools. Please remember to continue to follow all health and safety precautions to help stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Sincerely,
Dr. Neil L. Howard, Jr.
Superintendent of Schools
Taconic Hills Central School District