



WANTAGH UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Superintendent of Schools

3301 BELTAGH AVENUE • WANTAGH, NEW YORK 11793 • (516) 679-6300 • FAX (516) 679-7806

November 25, 2020

Dear Parents,

On Monday, November 23, 2020, some areas of Nassau County were designated as Yellow Zones as part of New York State Department of Health's COVID-19 Micro-Cluster Strategy. **Our community has not received a Yellow Zone micro-cluster designation at this time.** As I shared with you last week, schools that are within a Yellow Zone are required to participate in COVID-19 surveillance testing and have twenty percent of their students and staff COVID-19 tested over a two-week period.

To prepare for the possibility of a Yellow Zone designation, we will begin an in-school COVID-19 testing program. By creating this program, our school district will be able to remain open should our area be designated as a Yellow Zone. Last week, our district applied for a license as a NYS Limited Service Laboratory. This application is still pending approval from NYS. Once it is approved, our district will be allowed to perform COVID-19 testing. In addition, our district ordered free rapid tests from the NYSDOH that will be shipped to us once our Limited Service Laboratory application is approved.

Here is some important information about our COVID-19 testing program:

- Twenty percent of our students and staff at each school building would be tested over a two-week period if we receive a Yellow Zone Designation.
- Students and staff will be randomly selected to participate in the testing program.
- Students would not be tested unless a parent provided consent to do so.
- Testing would take place during the school day with a handful of students and staff being tested each day at each school.
- Parents will be notified in advance if their child was randomly selected to be tested.
- All parents are asked to complete the [Consent to COVID-19 Testing Form](#) to indicate if you provide the district consent to test your child.
- If you want to have your child tested by your own health care provider or at one of the Nassau County sites in lieu of participating in the school provided test you may choose

to do so. You would just need to provide the school district documentation of that test result.

- The rapid test that the district will use is being supplied for free from the NYSDOH and is called BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card by Abbott Laboratories.
- This rapid test is a nasal swab test that is less invasive than a PCR test, with the nasal swab being more like a Q-Tip and only going approximately ½ inch into the nose.
- Testing will be performed by our school nursing staff.
- Parents will be notified immediately of a positive result for their child for immediate follow-up with their health care provider.

**Once again, our community has not been designated a Yellow Zone at this time.** However, we are taking these steps to prepare for the possibility that we could receive this designation. I understand that it is a very difficult decision to have your child participate in rapid testing in a school setting. **However, if we are unable to meet the twenty percent testing requirements that the NYSDOH has for school districts in Yellow Zones, it could force us to close for in-person instruction.** Of course, we are committed to doing everything in our power to stay open for our students and our community. As such, please help with our efforts by completing this [Consent to COVID-19 Testing Form](#) to allow your child to participate in our COVID-19 testing program. One form should be completed for each child that attends our schools.

It remains our goal to keep our schools open for in-person instruction for as long as we safely can do so. I thank you for your continued support and patience as we work through this challenging time.

Sincerely,

John C. McNamara

Superintendent of Schools