



Binghamton City School District

Christopher Columbus School
164 Hawley Street
PO Box 2126
Binghamton, NY 13902-2126
(607) 762-8100
Fax: (607) 762-8110

October 21, 2020

Dear Binghamton Families,

We are preparing and looking forward to welcoming our students back into our buildings. **Due to the continuation of the state's "yellow zone" designation, the Binghamton City School District will delay in-person learning for an additional week, and begin in-person instruction on Monday, Nov. 2.**

The yellow zone designation has presented new challenges for our schools. Today, the Governor announced that the outlined Broome County cluster will remain yellow, and that our local positivity rate has improved marginally, going from 4.8 percent on Oct. 12 to 4.6 percent on Oct. 19. This additional delay of one week will allow us to implement state mandated testing, and we hope, will also provide time to see a consistent decline in our community's COVID-19 positivity rate.

Local health officials have stated that the rising COVID-19 rates in our area are associated with community spread. It's important to understand that the virus is not originating in our schools. However, testing our students and staff is a precaution that will help enhance the health and safety of our school community, and prevent further spread of the virus.

1. All BCSD schools are affected by this mandate, which means that testing will be taking place in all ten of our buildings.
2. Each week, 20 percent of our school population, including students and staff, must be tested.
3. We are currently distributing and collecting consent/refusal forms, which can be read and downloaded here. These are being mailed to homes this week and the district is working on creating a submission process through your child's GoCanvas account. **No child will be tested without parental permission.** *However, in order to comply with the governor's order without penalty, we must administer ~800 tests per week. We need your help to make this possible.*
4. This COVID test will not be the large nasal swab. Instead, it will be the Rapid Test (Abbot ID NOW) with a swab to the interior, lower portion of the nose.
5. COVID testing of students will begin when students return to our buildings and will take place within our school buildings.
6. Parents/guardians will be notified if their child participated in testing the day that testing occurred, with test results communicated within 24 hours
7. There is no cost for individuals to participate in the testing.

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I understand that a great deal is being asked of our families, faculty, and staff. Please know that this testing is essential for our students to return to school, and our schools to remain open. If you have questions regarding testing, please direct them to COVID19Coordinator@binghamtonschoools.org. We will also be hosting a webinar next week to review the procedures and answer any additional questions. I deeply appreciate your support, participation, and open-mindedness throughout these challenging times. We are better and stronger together.

With Patriot Pride,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tonia". The lettering is cursive and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke at the top of the first letter.

Dr. Tonia Thompson

Superintendent of Schools

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