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To: [SaGurney, Pamela](#)
Subject: District Update
Date: Tuesday, August 31, 2021 2:10:19 PM

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Dear Southwestern Families:

Welcome back for a great school year! We are looking forward to having our students back on Wednesday, September 8, 2021 full time! You will notice a few changes in the transportation department. We are sharing the services of Mr. Spacht as the Transportation Supervisor with Frewsburg Central School. We will be adding a "Parent App" for your use that will improve efficiency and communication. Additional information is forthcoming. You will notice the name of Southwestern and Frewsburg on the App.

On Friday we received the following notice from the NYSDOH: (stated directly from NYSDOH)

"P-12 school settings: After careful review and consideration of CDC recommendations for face coverings/masks in school settings, I hereby adopt such recommendations, imposing them as requirements, where applicable, until this determination is modified or rescinded. Accordingly, universal masking of teachers, staff, students, and visitors to P-12 schools over age two and able to medically tolerate a face covering/mask and regardless of vaccination status, is required until this determination is modified or rescinded."

Universal masking will be required/mandated in all school buildings and on the school bus. Masks will not be required outside of the school building.

The Chautauqua County Health Department is working with school districts to provide a COVID-19 Screening Testing Program. As the parent/guardian you will need to grant written permission before any testing can occur on school grounds. You will receive a form to be filled out before the start of school. We will notify all of you when the testing will begin at Southwestern. We are hopeful this will enable us to identify and provide the safest environment possible for our students. Our number one goal is to keep kids in school five days a week in a safe environment. Additional information will be forthcoming once we have all of the details in place with Chautauqua County.

The following information has been provided by the Chautauqua County Health Department in regards to surveillance testing in schools.

The goal of testing is to:

- Protect students and staff
- Prevent COVID-19 spread in schools by identifying asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic cases
- Build confidence among families and staff that returning to school is safe

Types of testing that will be available to schools:

- Pool testing with follow-up reflex (individual-level) testing for positive pools
 - Pool testing kits will be distributed to schools
- Rapid testing with Binax cards

What is Pool Testing?

- Twelve specimens are "pooled" together and tested at one time
- Type of test: PCR (polymerase chain reaction)

- Analyzed by Quadrant Biosciences Laboratory
- Specimen type: cheek swab (collects saliva)
- Results ready in 24 hours from arrival at lab. 48 hours for individual results
- Reflex (individual-level) testing for positive pools

What is Binax Testing?

- Type of test: rapid antigen
- Analyzed by school nurses
- Specimen type: anterior nasal swab
- Results ready in 15 minutes

Current CDC recommendations for testing (as of 8/17/21):

- Students and staff who are NOT fully vaccinated for COVID-19
 - Frequency: weekly
 - Volume: ~10% of unvaccinated population (pools of 12)
- High-risk sports and extracurricular activity participants who are NOT fully vaccinated
 - Frequency: twice weekly
 - Volume: all unvaccinated persons participating in these activities should be routinely tested

Who should be tested with Binax (at the discretion of the school nurse)?

- Symptomatic students or staff
- Anyone who needs weekly or twice-weekly testing, but was unable to participate in pool testing that week
- Asymptomatic, vaccinated students or staff who were exposed to a positive case (3-5 days after close contact)

Please reach out with any questions and have a great rest of the summer.

Mrs. Donahue

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