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Letter from the Superintendent

TUCKAHOE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT <email@blackboard.com>

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Reply-To: email@blackboard.com

To: jmazzillo6@gmail.com



Dear Tuckahoe School Community,

As we enter the new year, we are excited to report some promising developments.

Recently, the Westchester County Department of Health (WCDOH) updated rules on who has to quarantine in the event of a positive COVID-19 case. Schools are no longer required to quarantine all individuals who have been in the room with an individual who tested positive. Moving forward, we will only need to report and quarantine individuals who have been in *close contact* with an individual who tests positive for COVID-19. A close contact is an individual who has been within 6 feet for 10 or more cumulative minutes with an infected individual. There are different criteria for school buses and lunch. Additionally, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) has reduced the number of days asymptomatic individuals exposed to a positive case are required to quarantine from 14 days to 10 days. These new guidelines greatly improve our ability to keep schools open for in-person instruction, although it is expected that students/staff will still have to quarantine and/or go remote at times.

These are all evidenced-based changes. According to contact tracing conducted by the WCDOH, it has become clear that COVID-19 is spread in both large and small gatherings that occur outside of school. I commend our administration, faculty, staff, and students for their diligent efforts to prevent the spread of the virus in our schools.

Meanwhile, vaccinations are being rolled out to frontline workers in New York State. School personnel with healthcare responsibilities such as school nurses, psychologists, mental health workers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech therapists are eligible for COVID vaccinations. Eligible TUFSD staff members were immediately notified, and staff who were cleared received their first dose. The rest of our school staff is in the next stage (1B) of the vaccination distribution, and we are making plans for when this happens.

As we adjust to all of these changes, our students continue to benefit from the skilled and talented educators of the TUFSD. Whether through their innovative ways of creating a welcoming classroom environment, their deft approaches to social-emotional learning, or their delivery of rigorous, standards-based lessons, our professionals have ensured that students receive the quality education they rightly deserve. These dedicated individuals have been a grounding force for consistency during these tumultuous times.

The NYS Department of Health is reporting more than 1,000 newly confirmed positive COVID-19 cases in its latest data. Here is the number of active COVID-19 cases in Westchester, by municipality, according to the Department of Health's [new dashboard](#). We remind you to follow all mitigation strategies to keep our school community safe during this time of a surge of positive cases in our country.

Thank you, as always, for your continued patience and flexibility. This is a community that has been successful in coming together to prioritize the safe and effective functioning of our schools. Looking ahead to the new year, there is a great deal for which we can be hopeful.

Sincerely,

Dr. Amy Goodman

Superintendent

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