



## BUFFALO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Office of the Superintendent

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June 9, 2021

Dear BPS Families and Staff,

Updated mask guidance from the New York State Department of Health was announced on Monday evening June 7<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, I am updating my letter to you dated June 6, 2021. All staff, and students, and visitors to BPS must continue to wear masks and social distance INDOORS for the remainder of the academic year. Our protocols and rationale are as follows:

- Masks may be eliminated for OUTDOOR recess, OUTDOOR physical education classes, and all OUTDOOR athletic events.
- However, while reported cases are dropping to their lowest rates this year, there is still COVID in the community and people are still dying from it. Zip codes where our students reside are reporting cases.
- COVID cases right now in Erie County are highest in the 10-19 age group. Though teens are rarely hospitalized with COVID, cases can be severe.
- ALL children should have equal opportunity to be safe in school. We do not wish to single out any child who cannot be vaccinated, is immunocompromised, or is medically fragile and susceptible to severe COVID disease.
- More children 12 years and older and more adults should be encouraged to be vaccinated. Vaccinations for children 0-11 years old are not available. Full vaccination rates range from 42% - 89% in Buffalo zip codes.
- Our safety protocols work. Buffalo Public Schools had no outbreaks even as we opened schools for in-person learning through the winter and spring. COVID rates were much higher then.

In the weeks ahead, we will reexamine how we conduct our in-school COVID testing strategy to reflect the lower overall community spread. We will continue to conduct rapid antigen testing for those who are symptomatic.

We will monitor our safety protocols and cases through the remainder of the school year. I will issue safety directives for summer school in the next week or two.

Thank you for your full cooperation on this important safety and equity matter for all of our children, families and staff.

Respectfully,

Dr. Kriner Cash  
Superintendent

*“Putting Children & Families First to Ensure High Academic Achievement for All”*