



## Hamburg Central School District

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

Administration Building

5305 Abbott Rd.

Hamburg, NY 14075-1699

Telephone: (716) 646-3200 x 7220 FAX: (716) 646-3209

---

March 31, 2021

Dear Hamburg Central School District Families,

I hope everyone remains safe and well. The purpose of this letter is to update all of you on our efforts to be proactive in the event that the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the New York State Education Department (NYSED) revise their guidance to schools.

- On March 12, I sent a letter as the President of the Erie-Niagara School Superintendents Association to Governor Cuomo urging him to direct his state agencies to review their guidance to schools, including the social distancing rules, in light of the most recent research around the spread of COVID-19 in school settings. That letter was signed by nearly every area school superintendent and 22 local physicians, including specialists in Infectious Disease and Pediatric Psychiatry.
- On March 19, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control updated its guidance for schools, which stated that it was safe for students to be in school with three feet of social distance, as long as other mitigations strategies (masking, hand hygiene, etc.) were followed.
- Even though the CDC has acted upon the fact that schools are safe, the state has still not updated its guidance to schools since August 26, 2020.

Despite the lack of updated guidance from New York State, the Hamburg Central School District continues to plan for a return to Monday through Friday learning for all students.

- We convened our Operations, Social and Emotional Learning and Instructional Services working groups about a month ago.
- Our building based shared decision-making teams have been working out the details associated with a return to fully in-person learning for all students.
- Our administrative teams have been developing contingency plans around school lunch, district transportation, and classroom seating that can be enacted in response to updated guidance to schools once we receive it.
- Under any circumstances, the fully remote option will remain in place through the end of the year for all children who are currently in that placement.

Thanks to the feedback from our stakeholders, our planning has evolved to the point at which the district is prepared to return all students to fully in-person learning beginning April 26, 2021, pending the release of updated guidance from the New York State Department of Health. April 26<sup>th</sup> is the most responsible tentative return date because once we do receive new guidance, it will take some time to make sure that final adjustments to bus routing, class schedules, classroom seating, and arrangements for spacing in common areas, like cafeterias, are compliant and practical. We also want to allow time for families to adjust their routines at home. Finally, April 26<sup>th</sup> is two weeks after the Spring Recess, which would allow for any travel-related COVID infections to be addressed.

Since the beginning of this pandemic, there has been little, or no, discretion afforded to local school districts. If there is any opportunity for local discretion to be exercised by school districts, the district will exercise it on our own behalf, according to the science, and return all of our students to school Monday through Friday if it is safe and responsible to do so.

Importantly, the Hamburg Central School District will be considerate in the event that changes are made, particularly as it relates to our tentative return date of April 26<sup>th</sup>. We will give students, families and staff as much notice as possible because we know that everyone will need time to adjust to any change we make.

Thank you for your continued partnership in the learning and growth of your children. I will continue to keep you updated regarding our tentative return date as events require.

Stay safe and be well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Cornell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "M" and "C".

Michael R. Cornell  
Superintendent of Schools