



CANDOR CENTRAL SCHOOL

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Superintendent
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Dear Candor School Community:

Amidst the growing pressure to reopen schools during the Pandemic, this communication is written to help the school community understand the factors involved with reopening Candor Schools.

First, the District fully recognizes the challenges that the school community faces during this unprecedented time period. Parents, guardians, teachers, staff, and especially students, have all sacrificed during the reign of COVID-19. I can say with absolute certainty that we all hope for a swift return to normalcy in both school operations and everyday life.

Specifically, regarding school closures in New York State, every district's unique and individualized operating plan is a function of Resources and Regulations.

Resources: Individual districts entered the Pandemic with differing available resources. Some schools have new or larger buildings. Others have more certified teachers and available personnel. Candor Schools did not enter the Pandemic period with an overabundance of staff or room. Our AM/PM cohort system was designed for safety for students and families and was limited by the availability of existing rooms and teachers. Stated plainly, we did not have enough rooms or teachers to split our PK-12 classes into two separate groups and bring them to school full-time. In the Elementary alone, we lack approximately 12 rooms and 10 certified teachers to maintain social distance requirements in our classrooms and buildings.

In creating our reopening plan during the summer of 2020, we maximized our available resources and created a plan that was safe for students, provided some degree of normalcy (4 days per week of instruction), and gave students regular access to academic support, social-emotional support, food services (5 days per week if requested), and reasonable mask wearing time periods. Unfortunately, our limited resources have always been the governing factor in the development and implementation of our reopening plan since the beginning of the school year.

Regulations: The Tioga County Health Department, the State Department of Health, and the Federal Center for Disease Control have all issued regulations that must be adhered to in the reopening of schools. Masks and 6-foot social distancing in schools are required by regulation. To violate Local, State, and Federal regulations put students, staff, and the entire District at risk.

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Personally, I have been aggressively annoying to the County regarding existing regulations and discrepancies I see within the rules (ex. Student athletes can wrestle but they can't sit within 6 feet of each other during Math or English). Consistently, I have been told the State Department of Health controls the guidelines under which the District must operate. I have also been told local representatives are the best avenue to express our concerns. Candor's State Senator is Fred Akshar, and our State Assemblyman is Chris Friend. I have contacted both offices and expressed my concerns regarding school reopening criteria and have asked for consideration of relief from the 6-foot social distancing regulation. To date, we have seen no formal movement on the issue, however, I have noticed the beginning of political discussions on this issue in the past week.

As we move into spring, we continue to hope for consistently decreasing positivity rates of COVID-19. We also eagerly await regulatory relief from the State of New York so we can successfully bring our students back into our buildings.

As always, please feel free to contact me if you have questions or concerns at JKisloski@candorcs.org or 659-5010.

Respectfully,
Jeffrey J. Kisloski
Superintendent

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