

**Floral Park-Bellerose School District**  
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**Kathleen Sottile , Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Floral Park-Bellerose School District Community,

I hope everyone enjoyed their Thanksgiving holiday. This is a follow up to my communication last week regarding information pertaining to the COVID-19 Micro-cluster Focus Zones ([governor.ny.gov](http://governor.ny.gov)). In my previous correspondence, the Yellow Zone required random testing of 20% of the in-person staff and students over the course of a two-week period. In the Governor's latest update, only the Orange and Red Micro-cluster Focus zones were discussed. **The following information is taken directly from the Governor's latest guidance, which was issued yesterday, November 30, 2020.**

***Strategy 3 - Keep Schools Open Safely ([governor.ny.gov](http://governor.ny.gov))***

*One of the most critical aspects of managing the COVID-19 pandemic for governments and parents alike has been answering the question of how and when schools should remain open. On that point, experts from around the globe have determined that as long as a school's infection rate is under control and remains under the infection rate of the community at large, schools should remain open, particularly for students in K-8. Not only does school provide parents with support in terms of childcare, it provides a regularity to life which has been missing for so many children throughout this pandemic.*

*Under New York's Winter Plan, efforts will be focused on keeping K-8 and Special Education schools open as long as it can be done safely. The first step will be to establish sustainable, ongoing testing in schools so that they can continue operating in the long term. **As part of this, schools located in Orange and Red Micro-cluster Zones will be required to conduct weekly testing. Schools in Orange Zones will be required to test 20% of in person students, faculty, and staff over the course of a month, and schools in Red Zones will be required to test 30% of in person students, faculty, and staff over a month. Pool testing will be allowed as well.***

*These protocols represent the minimum standard required for schools to stay open and the state may adjust requirements for specific districts based on any special circumstances which may arise. While local districts are able to close at levels under the state's mandatory closure rule, they are urged to keep K-8 schools open whenever it is safe.*

Understanding the Floral Park-Bellerose School Communities' desire to keep schools open safely for in person instruction, our administrative team and school nurses, in conjunction with the NYSDOH and the New York State Education Department, are working on a plan to either provide testing through our own staff, parents providing test results from their doctor or a medical professional, or partner with an outside agency. What does this mean for us?

In the very near future, we will be identifying a testing plan and will require your cooperation that will either mean collecting your consent to test students on our school grounds, or having you respond to our request to have your child tested by a medical professional. We are hopeful that we will not fall into one of the Micro-cluster Zones, but in the event we do, we will have to test the required amount of students and staff.

Another holiday season is now upon us, and health experts warn that the pandemic may present more challenges in the weeks to come. I know we have the ability to pull together as a school community, overcome these obstacles, and continue to do what's best for our students and staff. It is imperative that we all follow the **guidelines set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**. Avoiding large gatherings, wearing masks, practicing social distancing and staying home when not feeling well will help prevent the spread of COVID.

As stated previously, our goal is to do everything possible to keep schools open safely for those students who are attending in-person classes, but we need your continued cooperation and support. I will update you immediately as more information is made available. Your continued diligence and commitment to our School District during this health crisis is truly valued and appreciated.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Kathleen Sottile". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "D" at the end.

Dr. Kathleen Sottile  
Superintendent of Schools