

# Grand Island Central School District

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[www.grandislandschools.org](http://www.grandislandschools.org)

November 18, 2020

Dear Grand Island Central School District Families and Staff,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that the Grand Island Central School District will shift to fully remote learning, for all students, **effective Monday, November 23, 2020 and until further notice.** While it brings great sadness for all of us, this move is necessary as a result of today's announcement by Governor Cuomo, that Grand Island has been designated as an Orange Zone under his Micro-Cluster Initiative. So, despite the fact that there is no evidence that our school district is a source of transmission of the virus, we need to comply with the Micro Cluster Action initiative and pivot to our 100% remote plan. Your child's principal will send you a direct email indicating your child's virtual schedule. You will also find a copy of each building's virtual schedule on our <https://www.grandislandschools.org/reopening> website.

I know that a 100% virtual schedule will be difficult for many families. Remote learning requires more support for children at home by family members than does in-person learning. Having smaller children at home all day requires someone to be home with them, which results in economic hardship for many families. Please reach out to your child's teacher, a school counselor or social worker, one of our psychologists or an administrator if there is anything that you feel we can do to assist you or your child in making this adjustment. No concern is too big or too small.

Your building principal will be in touch with you very shortly with important building-specific information about this transition, including details about how our students can get into the buildings to get any of their things that they will need for learning while home.

The exact factors of our move to remote, and the difficulty in reopening in an Orange/Red Zone are important. Being declared in an Orange Zone brings with it **rigorous testing** requirements, if we were to bring students back into the Hybrid model. **In order to reopen while a school is in an Orange or Red Zone, schools are required to:**

- **test 100% of all in-person students and staff during the first week of in-person learning;**
- **test 25% of all in-person students and staff each week until the school is no longer in an Orange or Red Zone;**  
**and**
- **keep individuals home for teaching and learning if they do not have a negative test.**

We are a public school district and not a public health institution. Even with the state providing the testing kits, reopening while in an Orange or Red Zone would be an economic and logistical burden. Assuming this mandate and its costs, while also educating children, without substantial federal, state and local assistance is simply not possible (while in the Orange and Red designation).

It is important to acknowledge how grateful I am for our students, staff and parents who have faithfully followed the non-pharmaceutical interventions of social distancing, face covering and/or mask wearing, attending to proper hand hygiene and the monitoring of our daily health. All of these measures have worked to ensure that schools maintain safe places for teaching and learning. I am confident that we will return to in-person teaching and learning just as safely as soon as we are permitted to do so.

As we experience the next phase of this public health crisis together, I will stay in close touch with public health officials and I will provide you with frequent updates regarding the status of our return to in-person teaching and learning.

Be safe and well during this new phase of the pandemic.

Sincerely,



Brian Graham, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools