

# FRONTIER CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

FRONTIER EDUCATIONAL CENTER

5120 ORCHARD AVENUE

HAMBURG, NY 14075-5657

Telephone: (716) 926-1711 Fax: (716) 926-1778



*Richard J. Hughes, Ed.D.*  
*Superintendent of Schools*

*Linda M. Leising*  
*District Clerk*

November 23, 2020

Dear Frontier Families,

Yesterday Governor Cuomo announced changes to the micro-cluster zones in Erie County. This change moved Hamburg and much of the county to an Orange Zone. The Orange Zone designation forces schools, both public and private to move to fully remote instruction only. The good news is that the transition to fully remote we already made this past week will not change. Staff and faculty that have already been reporting to our buildings and will continue going forward. The bad news is that fully remote learning will continue going forward.

Governor Cuomo suggested that schools could test out of an Orange Zone, allowing all schools to reopen for in-person learning. While this is included in the executive order, it is likely impossible as the district would have to ensure 100% of staff, faculty and students attending in-person, test negative for COVID before entering the school. Frontier continues to explore means for testing but we do not believe we can meet the 100% figure anytime in the near future, if ever. If the rules change for in-person learning, we will determine how the changes might allow us to change as well.

There are countless factors we take into consideration when making decisions, especially those that impact the lives of our students and community. First, do we have enough teachers and staff for in-person learning? With the number of positive cases and the large number of quarantines, we were already unable to continue in-person learning before the Orange Zone designation. Second, how can we provide more certainty in a time when uncertainty has sadly become the norm? Hamburg was listed as the zip code with the highest positivity rate in the area, if not NYS, at 9.78%. Medical experts are concerned that positive cases will only increase after the Thanksgiving holiday. That growth would likely take two weeks to occur, similar to the spike we are seeing now after Halloween.

With all this and more in mind, and to provide our parents with some certainty, Frontier will stay fully remote for the rest of 2020.

This is not a decision I take lightly. I would like nothing better than to have our Falcons back in our buildings for in-person learning. We will continue to monitor the situation in our community and county over the next month and provide updates as applicable. I wish each one of you a safe and Happy Thanksgiving!

Yours in Blue,  
*Richard J. Hughes, Ed.D.*  
Superintendent of Schools