

April 11, 2021

Dear Garden City School Community,

I have several updates I would like to share with you this week.

1. NY Department of Health Guidance

Friday evening, the NYS Department of Health has issued [a new version of school guidance](#). This new guidance permits students to be as little as three feet apart from each other, with certain exceptions. Also, barriers are no longer recommended, consistent with a [March 19 CDC Update](#).

With the new guidance:

- Desk barriers will be removed.
- Live student performances are being planned.
- Students in grades 6-8 will have access to their lockers. Dr. Nezowitz will send information to parents next week.
- We are assessing the viability for providing specials to our K-5 students. More information will be forthcoming.

It is important to note that contact tracing protocols remain the same. Next week we will take time to review the guidance, and make any additional adjustments as required by the DOH.

2. Quarantining

Each time we have a positive case of COVID-19, we consult with the Nassau County Department of Health. The questions they ask include: How far apart are the students? Were they wearing a mask? Was the positive student symptomatic?

The contact tracing starts at the building level, which means that the building administrator or school nurse traces the steps/contacts of the positive case. We are using the 6ft radius method to determine who will be quarantined, consistent with the DOH requirements. This method is the least restrictive one and most apt to keep students safely in school. We consider only contacts of 6 feet or fewer, and contact time greater than 10 minutes. In every case, we follow the recommendation of the Department of Health. In some cases, the DOH or the District identifies outside contacts such as parties and sleepovers. The DOH takes these contacts into consideration when making their recommendations regarding quarantining.

3. Positive Cases

Since Tuesday, we have learned of 5 individuals who tested positive for COVID-19.

Garden City High School - 3 students
Garden City Middle School - 1 staff member

Stratford School - 1 staff member

I am pleased to see our numbers going down.

4. Elementary Programs - FLES and Quest

We shared with the Board of Education some proposed changes with our programs, including FLES and Quest.

FLES: Next year, we are expanding our FLES program to grades 2 and 3. Our students will have additional opportunities to learn about language and cultures in grades 2 and 3 before learning Spanish in grades 4 and 5.

Quest: Next year, our incoming 5th graders who were in Quest in 3rd grade will continue in the existing program. Beginning next year, we will transition from Quest as it presently exists to providing similar long-term interest-based projects as offered in Quest to all students. It is important that all students actively cultivate their own knowledge, apply learning to real world experiences, and deepen their critical thinking, problem solving, and research skills. Our Director of Mathematics and STEAM, building administrators, and our technology team have begun planning. These plans also include before and after school clubs for our students. Our goal is to challenge all students consistent with their abilities and interests in all subject areas, including the arts, and to build their confidence as learners.

Finally, our students are outside much more, and we are looking forward to our end of the year activities – some new and many traditional events. We start our spirit week on Monday with fun activities all week. Our Homecoming Game will be on Saturday and I hope to see many of you there.

Enjoy the rest of your Sunday!

Sincerely,

Kusum

Kusum Sinha, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools