



COVID-19 Update #29 October 20, 2020

Health, Safety, and Fall Athletics

Dear Parents, Guardians, Faculty and Staff,

Last Friday the Maine Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Maine Department of Education announced that based on York County's incidences of COVID-19, the county is moving back to a **green** designation according to its [Health Advisory System Rating](#).

Although our schools remain in a **yellow hybrid** learning model, it has raised questions about in-person fall athletics, especially interscholastic competition. Just a week prior, on October 11, 2020 I informed you that the Maine CDC declared an **outbreak** of COVID-19 at the Coastal Ridge Elementary School (CRES). Based on contact tracing, the outbreak was associated with youth athletic organizations outside of the school department. In addition, on October 13, 2020 I informed you that an individual at York High School (YHS) tested positive for COVID-19.

Since the onset of the pandemic, my first priority is to protect the health and safety of students and school employees to keep our schools open to the greatest extent possible. We are trying to do our best to keep our schools open and prevent outbreaks in other York schools.

I also believe that school activities and athletics are essential to the school experience. During the pandemic and this unprecedented time in York's history, we have been looking towards the extracurricular programs we can safely offer to our students. For example, as of this past Monday we are able to offer in-person practices for students engaged in some fall sports. The [Fall Athletics Activity Guidelines](#) in place as of today allows students to practice in cohort groups. Unfortunately, it does not allow for interscholastic games at this moment in time given the active cases of COVID-19 associated with the school department.

The outbreak at CRES has taken its toll on staffing in other York schools because we have employees that have had to quarantine as well as employees with children who attend CRES and do not have childcare during distance learning. Due to the temporary shutdown of CRES, we lost 11 in-person school days. The case at YHS caused 30 students and teachers in close contact to quarantine. This also impacted staffing and our ability to deliver instructional services. This placed other York schools in jeopardy of closing. The CRES closure negatively impacted the lives of hundreds of families.

Because of the ever-evolving nature of COVID-19, we are continually evaluating the delivery of instruction and extracurricular activities in York Schools. Although York County is “green”, our situation is unique to York.

York High School Athletic Director Jeff Oliver and I have received questions about the status of athletics in York as well as health and safety. We have compiled these questions and will answer them in a forum scheduled for tomorrow, Wednesday, October 21, 2020 from 6:00 to 6:45 p.m. on [Town Hall Streams](#). We hope that you will be able to attend.

Kind regards,

Lou Goscinski, Superintendent