



# Pearl River School District

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**Marco F. Pochintesta, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools

November 20, 2020

Dear Pearl River School Community,

Yesterday, Governor Cuomo announced additions to the Rockland County Yellow Zone map, which included Pearl River. This afternoon we received official notification from the NYS Department of Health that all five of the District's schools: Pearl River High School, Pearl River Middle School, Evans Park Elementary School, Franklin Avenue Elementary School, and Lincoln Avenue Elementary School are in the newly designated "yellow zone" under the [NYS COVID-19 Cluster Action Initiative](#). We have been in communication with the Governor's Office and the Rockland County Department of Health, and based on those discussions we are mobilizing to meet the yellow zone requirements for schools.

According to the Cluster Action Initiative, schools that fall within a yellow zone and are operating an in-person model of instruction must begin testing 20% of its students attending the in-person program, and 20% of the faculty and staff over the two week period immediately following the announcement of a yellow zone. Our first reporting deadline of testing results to the NYS Education Department is December 7, 2020.

In order to continue operating an in-person hybrid model of instruction, a school located within a yellow zone must continue to randomly test 20% of its students and staff every two weeks. However, if the results of the testing over the first two weeks reveal that the positivity rate among in-person students and staff is lower than the yellow zone's current 7-day positivity rate, testing at the school does not have to continue.

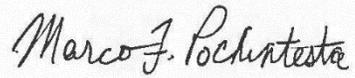
All students who attend in-person instruction must participate in COVID-19 testing. Students who are on remote learning do not need to participate in testing. In order to complete this first round of testing, we are asking parents to volunteer to have their children tested for COVID-19 by Sunday, November 29th. Parents will receive a list of free testing sites. Parents may also choose to have their child's health care provider administer a COVID-19 test, but depending on the provider, there may be a co-pay. If a school does not have enough volunteers to meet the 20% requirement, the District will randomly select enough students to meet the 20% threshold. If we cannot meet the 20% requirement, the school would move to remote instruction until the school is no longer in a yellow zone. **Please click on the following form to respond to whether or not you will volunteer to have your child tested. [COVID-19 Testing Survey Form](#)**

At this time, we also ask that parents notify the school immediately if they are switching their child's learning model from hybrid to remote, or vice versa. Parents who request that their child return to in-person instruction from remote instruction will be required to participate in COVID-19 testing if the school is still in the yellow zone.

We realize that this news is difficult, and families will have many more questions than can be answered in one letter. Our communication effort will be on-going as we develop answers to questions and have more information from the New York State Department of Health.

As I stated in my communication to families earlier this week, we are committed to keeping our schools open for in-person instruction for as long as possible. This can only happen with the cooperation of our school community. In order to keep schools open we will have to meet the required 20% testing threshold for students, teachers, and staff every two weeks until we are no longer required to test. Should we find that we are not able to meet the testing requirement, we will have to move to our remote learning model until the yellow zone designation is lifted. For the time being, we are going to remain open for in-person instruction while we implement our plan of action for meeting this latest challenge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marco J. Pochintesta". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned on a light gray rectangular background.