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November 9, 2020

Dear Summit Parents and Caregivers,

As you may know, the COVID-19 infection rate is increasing rapidly throughout Erie County. Governor Cuomo has instituted a new strategy of monitoring and responding to outbreaks of new cases within very specific areas which are called **micro-clusters**. Our students, the individuals we serve, and our staff have diligently followed our health and safety protocols to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. ***Despite everyone's best efforts, the rising community spread of the virus is impacting the operation of Summit Academy and our OPWDD programs.***

This afternoon, Governor Cuomo and Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz announced that several areas within Erie County meet the criteria for a "Yellow Zone" designation. This is a precautionary zone defined as an area with a "seven day rolling positive test rate average above 2.5% and 10 or more new cases per 100,000 residents for ten consecutive days." This "yellow zone" currently impacts several towns in Erie County including Amherst, Tonawanda (City and Town), Lancaster, Buffalo, Orchard Park, Hamburg, Lackawanna, West Seneca, and Grand Island.

What this means for Summit:

For Summit Academy: As of today, our school remains open and operating within a "yellow zone." As such, our school buildings can remain open for in-person instruction however, beginning next week, ***we will be required to randomly test 20% of our in-person staff and students each week until the data points for our area drop below yellow zone levels.*** If our school cannot meet the 20% testing requirement, we must transition to fully remote instruction. Parents may choose to opt-out of this testing but your child would then move to fully virtual services. Information about this process, as well as additional details from the Erie County Department of Health, will be available soon. As soon as we have more information, we will share it with you.

For all OPWDD Programs (including STEPS, Respite, PACE, Community Habilitation): Due to the many safeguards we put in place as part of our Reopening Plans, Summit's OPWDD programs remain open and are already operating under the directives for "Yellow Zone" conditions as outlined by OPWDD with one exception: weekly Covid-19 testing is recommended for staff and program participants. We are investigating how we will enact this recommendation and will provide additional information as soon as it's available.

Although our school and OPWDD programs remain open as of today, this situation may evolve rapidly. As such, please be prepared to transition temporarily to remote instruction/service delivery and create plans for child-care if needed.

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Sincerely,

Susan Whittaker

Susan Whittaker, Ed.D, SBL
Principal - Summit Academy

Diana Schmit

Diana M. Schmit, MS
Vice President – Community & Adult Services