

'In the Loop' with the Lewiston-Porter Board of Education

Lewiston-Porter to meet with parents regarding reopening in September

BY JODEE RIORDAN

Board of Education President

With our reopening plan now out, we are working diligently as a district to put our plan into action. We are focusing on reopening Tuesday, Sept. 8, in the hybrid model outlined in our plan. Our plan allows students to attend school in person or choose a 100% remote learning option. As parents decide what the best option is for their children, we are committed to providing all the information we can to support our families.

First, carefully follow Superintendent Paul Casseri's messages to the community. Paul sends updates via email regularly with absolutely everything you need to know. Things change quickly in this new COVID-19 world, and Paul updates the community in real time. The messages are shared on all social media. This week, the district also began sending text message notifications with a link to Paul's community message.

Visit the Lewiston-Porter website for complete information. Click the COVID-19 reopening tab on the homepage to be directed to the "COVID-19 Communication & Information" center. There you will have access to all plans, FAQs, documents, forms and a complete archive of COVID-19 communication from the superintendent.

Attend one of our family forums: primary level forum (grades K-5): Aug. 12 at 5:30 p.m.; Aug. 19 at noon; Aug. 26 at 5:30 p.m. Secondary level forum (grades 6-12): Aug. 13 at 5:30 p.m.; Aug. 20 at noon; and Aug. 27 at 5:30 p.m. All forums will take place in the high school auditorium with proper social distancing and all safety protocols on place.

The forums will offer an opportunity for parents to review and ask specific questions regarding our plan. Attendance at each forum will be limited to 50 parents per event, with only one parent per family. The events will be hosted live in a virtual, interactive format with unlimited attendance capacity. Families who attend virtually will be able to submit questions live online during the forums.

To register to attend in-person, or for the links for each virtual meeting, go to "Community Forums" in the "COVID-19 Communication & Information."

In order to fully prepare for the new year, we ask that each family complete the learning and transportation commitment form as soon as possible. This will allow us to complete planning for both teaching and learning and to determine accurate bus routes. It is vital that we understand exactly how many families we are serv-

NOW ONLINE

•Read Superintendent Paul Casseri's messages to the community.

•Find updates from Gov. Andrew Cuomo pertaining to reopening schools.

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ing through 100% remote learning. Parents who make that decision will be asked to remain in full remote learning through the first 10 weeks of school. Families can rejoin the hybrid model or any other shift in our plan after 10 weeks.

The deadline for this commitment was set for Friday, Aug. 14, but, in response to feedback from parents, that has been amended:

"Some parents have questioned why the district planned Family Forums after the deadline for the decision of August 14th. I am sorry for the confusion. The forums were created to have opportunities for parent family feedback through August. We recognize that many families know what they want to do and simply need clarification to better understand the model. We hope that the majority of families

will be able to respond by August 14th. Please understand that if, as a family, you plan on attending a forum either in person or virtually and wish to make your decision as to whether to return in the staggered attendance model or opt for the 100% remote after these meetings that is absolutely fine," Paul stated in today's community message.

While we are encouraging families to make the decision as soon as possible, parents can make their decision through Friday, Aug. 28, if needed (following the final forum on Aug. 27).

Paul also addressed the specific concerns of our families of children with special needs: "We know that this process has been very difficult for families of students with disabilities. These are our most fragile students both from a health and a learning standpoint. The New York State Education Department was quite clear that all aspects of a child's IEP must be met in any learning model that is developed. Certainly, we will address general questions related to special education at all our forums, but given the sensitivity of some of these cases and keeping in mind HIPAA and FERPA rights of families and children, it is essential that families reach out to the Director of Special Education, Dr. Barbara

Godshall, and/or building Principals to develop and address specific needs and concerns."

As we move forward with our planning, we continue to wait for Gov. Andrew Cuomo to announce what reopening will actually look like in New York state. The decision on reopening schools rests fully with him. We could open with the hybrid model outlined in our plan or be told to go 100% remote.

While the governor prepares this decision, he has continued to add requirements and (sometimes conflicting) guidance. We continue to work together, and in collaboration with our fellow school districts and local and state officials, to meet each change. As soon as we know the official word, we will communicate how our plans fit within the framework allowed by law.

The Board of Education will meet for a work session at 6 p.m. Monday, Aug. 10. We have been meeting in-person since July 1, following all safety guidelines and protocols. The public can attend all meetings via Zoom. The link is posted on the district homepage: meeting ID: 722 6316 0298; passcode: Lewport.

Please join us. We will meet next on Monday, Aug. 24, at 6 p.m.

Stay strong, Lewiston-Porter!

Niagara, Erie counties complete joint Tonawanda Creek Road project

Leaders from Erie and Niagara counties on Thursday cut the ribbon to reopen a section Tonawanda Creek Road in the Town of Clarence that has been closed since 2014. The project is part of the bicounty Tonawanda Creek slope stabilization and roadway reconstruction effort that also includes projects in the towns of Lockport

and Pendleton.

"Today is a great example of what can be accomplished when local governments collaborate," said Niagara County Legislature Chairman Becky Wydysh. "The Niagara County Department of Public Works took the lead on this project in close consultation with their counterparts in Erie and the

result is the successful completion of the Lockport and Clarence projects, with the work in Pendleton heading quickly toward conclusion."

"The completion of the Tonawanda Creek Road project is great news for motorists and residents, bringing the road back into service after extensive stabilization and reconstruction," said Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz. "Slope failures and soil subsidence issues demand a different approach for remediation, far more intensive than the usual mill-and-overlay process our crews use to repair roads. This project required extensive planning and cooperation between the Public Works' Departments of both Erie and Niagara counties, and I thank all of our partners for their work in getting this job done as expeditiously as possible."

According to Niagara County Department of Public Works, the total construction costs was \$7.3 million. The project was awarded to UCC Constructors Inc. in November 2019. Greenman-Pederson Inc. served as the consulting engineers. The Clarence and Lockport portions are now complete with Pendleton slated for completion by the end of August.

"By combining three different projects along the banks of Tonawanda Creek, we were able to create a single project that scored higher in rankings for state and federal funding," said Niagara County Legislator Tony Nemi. "Considering that southern Lockport and Pendleton are some of the fastest growing areas in all of Western New York, we need to be finding creative ways to fund our infrastructure needs, and working across county lines produced a win/win for both Erie and Niagara."

"This project is the result of a successful collaboration between Erie and Niagara Counties," said Erie County Legislator Ed Rath. "The residents of Clarence and neighboring communities have been patiently waiting for this news since the road's closure in 2014. I am glad both county governments could work together in support of taxpayers who deserve safe, reliable infrastructure."

Project Description

Clarence site:
A 400-foot-long segment of Tonawanda Creek Road between Westphalinger Road and Northfield Road failed and partially slid toward Tonawanda Creek in 2014. The road has been closed to

through traffic since the failure.

The cause of the failure was determined to be a weak layer of underlying soil below the roadway. This project utilized dry mix soil columns to strengthen the soil in order to support the roadway. The process mixes cement with the existing soil in the area of and through the depth of the failure. A load transfer platform is constructed on top of the columns, followed by a mechanically stabilized earth (MSE) wall to support the fill up to the grade of the road. The roadway was then reconstructed, along with new drainage, guide rail, signs and striping. The cost for this site was about \$2.1M. Work was completed in August 2020.

Lockport site:

A 1,000-foot-long segment of Tonawanda Creek Road, near Lockwood Lane, experienced distress including guide rail displacement and pavement cracking resulting from a slope failure. The slope stabilization performed under this project included a stream bank revetment (bank armoring) and the construction of a mechanically stabilized earth (MSE) wall to support the fill for the roadway. The roadway was then reconstructed, along with new drainage, guiderail, signs and striping. The cost for this site was about \$1.1M. Work was completed in April 2020.

Pendleton site:

This site is a 2.5-mile segment of Tonawanda Creek Road between Campbell Boulevard and Irish Road. The first 0.7 mile at the Campbell Boulevard end was milled and overlaid with two courses of asphalt. The remainder was reconstructed. The original concrete roadway was milled and then rubblized, to be used as subbase for the new roadway. The project includes new closed and open drainage throughout and new guiderail, signs and striping. The cost for this site is about \$4.1M, with completion anticipated by the end of August 2020.



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