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

Lew-Port continues to address COVID-19 changes

BY JODEE RIORDAN

Board of Education President

The Board of Education will meet this Monday, Dec. 14. This meeting will combine the December work session and monthly business meeting.

In keeping with a favorite holiday tradition, there will be a special recorded performance by the Lewiston-Porter music department. Please join us via Zoom at 6 p.m. The link to the webinar is posted on the Lewiston-Porter homepage, www.lew-port.com (passcode: Lancers).

With the recent flurry of COVID-19 cases at Lewiston-Porter and throughout our community, we recognize the concern and the uncertainty. Things continue to change quickly, and we want you to stay informed and confident as we go forward. Here is what you need to know to be "In the Loop":

Lewiston-Porter has fully prepared for the possibility of our district moving to a "yellow," "orange" or "red zone" designation, along with other areas of Niagara County. As I previously reported, it is our goal to remain open and continue to provide in-person learning as

long as we are able. To meet the testing requirement, Lewiston-Porter has applied and has been approved to become a limited service testing lab (LSL) with the NYS Department of Health. The Board of Education approved the designation and contract for testing support at a special meeting on Friday, Dec. 4.

There was good news from New York state this week, as the testing thresholds are significantly relaxed in all designations with a new emphasis on keeping schools open using these new testing protocols. Between the new testing protocols and being designated an LSL, we have confidence in our ability to keep our schools open in the hybrid model in "yellow," "orange" or "red zone" designations.

If you have any questions regarding the testing after reviewing the materials, reach out to your child's building principal, Dr. Patricia Grupka or Superintendent Paul Casseri directly and continue to closely follow updates sent from the district.

The district has finalized its hybrid-to-full-remote learning tran-

sition plans in the event of school/district closure. That document can be found on the Lewiston-Porter website.

The full remote learning plan for current hybrid students looks similar to the current remote Mondays, but there are minor changes at the secondary level (grades 6-12) and more significant changes at the elementary level (grades K-5). Parents should review this document carefully and begin to plan should it become necessary to move to a full remote model.

It is important to note that, in the event of a school closure and move to remote learning for hybrid students, those students currently in the district's 100% remote model would remain in that model until at least through Jan. 31, 2021, at the secondary level (grades 6-12) and March 12 for elementary level (grades K-5).

There has been a change in the notification protocol, in the event that a report of a COVID-19 positive case is received. The Niagara County Department of Health is overwhelmed with cases and finding it impossible to reach out to

families in a timely manner to initiate isolations and quarantines.

Dan Stapleton, Niagara County health director, has instructed Niagara County school districts that they are the first line of communication in terms of isolation and quarantine notifications. Working in collaboration with NCDOH, school district officials may initiate isolation and quarantine notifications with families. There will be follow-up from NCDOH for COVID-19 positive cases considered in isolation, but this may not always be the case for 14-day quarantines that develop as a result of contact with a COVID-19 positive case. Parents and families may be directed by district/building level administration and/or school nurses to quarantine or isolate per NCDOH direction and protocols. Staff, students and families will be required to follow that guidance.

As I have said over and over since last March, this is a lot. Thank you for staying vigilant, staying informed. We will continue to keep you "In the Loop." So, "Keep Calm and Carry On," Lewiston-Porter. We will get through this.

During season of giving, Red Cross urges blood donation

By the American Red Cross

December may be the season of giving – but it's typically a challenging time to collect enough blood donations. Add in a pandemic, and this year could be even tougher than usual. That's why the American Red Cross is urging those who are feeling well to give the gift of life by donating blood or platelets this holiday season.

The need for blood doesn't stop for holidays. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, more than 1 million blood transfusions will be given in the United States. Donations of all blood types are needed to ensure hospital shelves remain stocked to meet patient blood needs.

Make your appointment to give blood, platelets or plasma with the Red Cross by downloading the Red Cross Blood donor app, visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enabling the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device.

To encourage donations this holiday season, those who come to donate blood, platelets or plasma with the Red Cross Dec. 18-Jan. 4, 2021, will receive a long-sleeved Red Cross T-shirt, while supplies last.

Important COVID-19 Information for Donors

As COVID-19 hospitalizations increase, hospital demand for convalescent plasma has also grown.

COVID-19 convalescent plasma is a type of blood donation given by those who've recovered from this coronavirus. Their plasma contains antibodies that may help patients actively fighting the virus. Learn more about convalescent plasma and sign up to give at RedCrossBlood.org/Plasma4COVID.

The Red Cross is testing blood, platelet and plasma donations for COVID-19 antibodies. The test may indicate if the donor's immune system has produced antibodies to this coronavirus, regardless of whether an individual developed COVID-19 symptoms. Red Cross antibody tests will be helpful to identify individuals who have COVID-19 antibodies and may now help current coronavirus patients in need of convalescent plasma transfusions. Convalescent plasma is a type of blood donation collected from COVID-19 survivors that have antibodies that may help patients who are actively fighting the virus.

COVID-19 antibody test results will be available within one to two weeks in the Red Cross Blood donor app or donor portal at RedCrossBlood.org. A positive antibody test result does not confirm infection or immunity. The Red Cross is not testing donors to diagnose illness, referred to as a diagnostic test.

To protect the health and safety

of Red Cross staff and donors, it is important that individuals who do not feel well or believe they may be ill with COVID-19 postpone donation.

Each Red Cross blood drive and donation center follows the highest standards of safety and infection control, and additional precautions – including temperature checks, social distancing and face coverings for donors and staff – have been implemented to help protect the health of all those in attendance. Donors are asked to schedule an appointment prior to arriving at the drive and are required to wear a face covering or mask while at the drive, in alignment with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention public guidance.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities include:

- Lewiston
√ First Presbyterian Church, 505 Cayuga St., 1:30-6:30 p.m. Dec. 23
- Lockport
√ The Dale Association Inc., 33 Ontario St., 1-6 p.m. Dec. 22
- Middleport
√ Middleport Fire Hall, 28 Main St., 1-6 p.m. Dec. 21
- Newfane
√ Newfane Town Hall Community Center, 2737 Main St., 1-6 p.m. Dec. 21
- Niagara Falls
√ Grace Lutheran Church, 736

Cayuga Drive, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dec. 26

√ Niagara Riverside Resort, Niagara Riverside Resort, 7001 Buffalo Ave., 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 30

•North Tonawanda
√ Nash Road Free Methodist Church, 958 Nash Road, 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Dec. 23

•Sanborn
√ Lewiston Fire Co. No. 2, 1705 Saunders Settlement Road, 1-6 p.m. Dec. 28

•Youngstown
√ Youngstown Fire Hall, 625 Third St., 1:30-6:30 p.m. Dec. 22.

Download the American Red Cross blood donor app, visit RedCrossBlood.org, call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enable the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device to make an appointment, or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

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