

In the Loop with the Lewiston-Porter Board of Education

Lew-Port submits two options on reopening

BY **JODEE RIORDAN**
Board of Education President

Lewiston-Porter has submitted its reopening plan to the New York State Education Department (NYSED). The reopening plan provides for in-person instruction, remote learning, and a hybrid of the two approaches as required by NYSED. Superintendent Paul Casseri shared our reopening plan with the school community this week. The full plan was shared in his email and is posted to the district website, www.lew-port.com

Thank you to the 1,148 people who provided feedback through our survey. You significantly helped to shape our plan. As we worked to finalize the plan throughout the week, guidance from NYS continued to evolve beyond the 145-page document published July 14.

Clarification issued regarding social distancing now requires all students to be at least 6 feet apart at all times, effectively eliminating the opportunity for all students to be on campus at one time. Based on guidance from the New York State Department of Health, the Niagara County Department of Health and the New York State

Education Department, a hybrid learning model appears to best address the health and safety of our students and staff.

We will offer two options to return students to school:

•Option one is a hybrid model. In this option, we have divided our school population (pre-K-12) into two groups: A green group, letters A-L; and a white group, letters M-Z (making sure all students from the same family are in the same group). Mondays will be a full remote learning day. There will be no student attendance and all learning will take place remotely.

Students in the green group will attend on Tuesday and Wednesday, while students in the white group will attend on Thursday and Friday. For self-contained special education students and for English language learners, Mondays will be remote learning and attendance will take place Tuesday through Friday as required by NYSED guidance.

•Option two is a remote learning option, simultaneous with the hybrid model. This option will be handled separately and will be guided by specific staff assigned to facilitate specific online learning

programs for elementary students (K-5) and secondary students (6-12). This option will be handled by a dedicated core group of teachers focused solely on delivery of these learning programs.

Families with underlying medical issues or families that are simply not comfortable with a return to school may select this option.

There is specific paperwork that must be completed at each building for families that are selecting this option. Parents must make a decision for this option and complete all required paperwork by Friday, Aug. 14, so we can understand exactly how many families we are serving 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 re-join the hybrid model or any other shift in our plan after 10 weeks.

As Superintendent Casseri stated in his email, we are ready and willing to move to full attendance if New York state guidance changes or the governor's final decision on schools (expected next week) creates any possibility of full student attendance. The final decision on

school reopening rests fully with the governor. He could allow districts to implement their approved instructional plans, assessing reopening on a regional basis, or he may make a statewide decision not to reopen schools, which would force us to a 100% remote option. We will know more next week.

Once Gov. Cuomo announces exactly what reopening will look like, Lewiston-Porter will hold a series of parent forums. These will offer an opportunity for parents to review and ask specific questions regarding our plan.

Parents must sign up by building, and these forums will be limited to 50 parents per event. Only one parent per family may be in attendance at the forums. A sign up for these events will take place by building.

The forums will all take place in the high school auditorium on the following dates and times: elementary (PEC/IEC) forums will be held at 5:30 p.m. Aug. 12; noon, Aug. 19; and 5:30 p.m. Aug. 26. Secondary (middle/high school) forums will be held at 5:30 p.m. Aug. 13; noon, Aug. 20; and 5:30 p.m. Aug. 27. The events will be hosted live in a virtual, interactive

format. We encourage your family to attend.

The Board of Education fully supports the reopening plan and all efforts of the Lewiston-Porter administration, faculty and staff in returning to school safely and providing the best possible education to each student during this ongoing crisis. The board has been involved in planning at each step of the process. We share your concerns: We are parents, too. Our children, our families, are going through this with yours.

Please read the plan carefully and watch for more guidance from Superintendent Casseri. Please know everyone at Lewiston-Porter is here to support you and your family, whatever your needs.

In sharing the reopening plan, we understand many families will want and need more information, and others may even be critical of the plan. We encourage everyone to attend the forums, ask questions and continue to offer feedback. Feel free to reach out to me directly.

We are all in this together, and together we will all get through this.

Accolades

Stella Niagara high honor, honor rolls

Stella Niagara Education Park has announced following students have been named to its honor roll for the fourth quarter of the 2019-2020 academic year.

High Honor

Grade 4 – Rocco Hall, Lily Hartloff, Emily London and Reina Straub.

Grade 5 – Grace Burton, Elizabeth Cumbo and Maimouna Samb.

Grade 6 – Gary Hall, Ella Kutis, Adam McNab, Zachary Mietus, Giuliana Slepian and Caleb Walker.

Grade 7 – Ada Onyenma, Zoe Ranieri, Jenna Sweeney, Ava Taylor, Delilah Winker and Arian Zohur.

Grade 8 – Lily Clark, Madeline Heidt, Reese Honadle, Emily Mountain and Sofie Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

Honor

Grade 4 – Russell DeMiglio, Emma Grace, Caleb Koepcke and Sophie London.

Grade 5 – Victoria Christensen,

Aliye Huzmeli, Ethan Sears and Olivia Taylor.

Grade 6 – Cassidy Crogan, Anthony DeMiglio, Caden Koepcke, Francis Murphy, Cameron Panepinto and William Wagner.

Grade 7 – Mirabella Abbondanza, Aniyah Evans, Anna Cumbo, Daman Khabra, Elle Pauly and Chad Szymanski.

Grade 8 – Yusuf Huzmeli, Alicia Lamar and Christopher Trapasso.

"We are very proud of our students for their achievements during this difficult time," Stella Niagara commented in a press release.

NYWEA awards scholarship to Eric Smith of Youngstown

The New York Water Environment Association (NYWEA), a statewide nonprofit organization of water quality management professionals, announced it has awarded a \$12,000 Environmental Career Scholarship to Eric Smith to attend the University at Buffalo.

Smith, 18, son of Jennifer and David Smith of Youngstown, is enrolled in the engineering and applied science bachelor's degree program in the chemical engineering major at UB, beginning

in the fall 2020 semester.

In June, he earned his high school diploma with highest distinction from Lewiston-Porter Senior High School as salutatorian of his class and earned numerous accolades, including the President's Education Award for Outstanding Academic Excellence. He was also captain of the varsity swim team, president of concert band, and vice president of the Class of 2020, ambassador and a junior staff member for the Hugh O'Brian Leadership Conference (HOBY), a Leadership Youth of Niagara County (LYNC) graduate and president of Key Club. He has also been an active volunteer in his community and earned the HOBY Presidential Service Award.

Smith was introduced to water quality research through his participation in the International Student Science Fair (ISSF). As a member of a team of three students, his research project explored the use of mushroom mycelium for the absorption and abatement of motor oil pollution. The team aimed to develop a device that could float in water and be used to absorb oil and/or other contaminants in rivers and lakes. Smith and his team won the ISSF Excellence in Presentation Award.

In March 2019, he was again selected as a member of a three-person team for the ISSF in Singapore. The experiment in Sin-

gapore studied the use of green, leafy vegetables as a live root system for the abatement of nitrates and orthophosphates in bodies of water. Smith and his team researched the issue of eutrophication, the overgrowth of algal blooms caused by the nitrate and phosphate entering bodies of water through agricultural runoff. They determined that a device containing a live root system, nitrates and orthophosphates can be absorbed from bodies of water and broken down, to decrease the size of algal blooms.

Smith intends to continue this water quality research in college, exploring the sustainability and restoration of freshwater resources. He intends to pursue a variety of extracurricular interests at UB including the Honors Council, community service, water polo club and concert band.

After completing his bachelor's degree, Smith intends to work as a chemical engineer at an environmental company and hopes to make a difference in the field of engineering and help to preserve the environment.

"Engineering encompasses everything I am good at and enjoy, such as building, problem-solving, math and science," Smith said. "I am interested in helping develop and design processes to provide healthy air, water and soil. In addition, I'd like to help develop green and sustainable

products to help our environment."

Since the inception of its scholarship program in 1998, NYWEA has granted over \$571,000 in scholarship funding to 214 students. A total of \$52,000 is being awarded this year to 10 undergraduate students through the NYWEA scholarship program. Details on all NYWEA scholarships can be found at www.nywea.org/SitePages/Scholarships.

Youngstown Lions Club awards Riordan scholarships

The Youngstown Lions Club has awarded \$1,000 scholarships, honoring the memory of Neil Riordan, former mayor of Youngstown, to three Lewiston-Porter High School seniors.

Cameryn Cummings will continue her studies at Morrisville State College, majoring in animal science. Eric Smith will study chemical engineering at the University at Buffalo, while Eric Wieland will study diesel equipment technology at SUNY Morrisville.

A press release read, "The motto of the Lions Club is 'We Serve,' and these young adults, through their school activities and community volunteering, made them a perfect choice for the Youngstown Lions Club Scholarship honoring Neil Riordan."

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