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

Lewiston-Porter continues its adjustments to COVID-19

BY JODEE RIORDAN
Board of Education President

Wednesday is Veterans Day, and on behalf of the Board of Education and our Lewiston-Porter community, I extend our gratitude to all who served our country. We honor and thank you for your service.

Mondays are normally a day of virtual learning for all students in the hybrid model. With the Veterans Day holiday on Wednesday, there will be no virtual day this week. Hybrid students in the green group will be on campus on Monday and Tuesday, while students in the white group will be on campus Thursday and Friday. The district will be closed Wednesday, Nov. 11, in observance of Veterans Day.

Like all schools in New York, Lewiston-Porter is preparing for the possibility of having to move to remote-only instruction due to COVID-19 infection rates within our region. New York state's approach has transitioned to a targeted regional strategy of aggressively responding to micro-clusters in order to limit COVID-19 spread in a defined geographic area. This approach is taken to prevent broader viral transmission that would result in widespread economic shutdowns.

"Micro-clusters" are defined as

outbreaks of new cases within a limited and definable geographic area. These zones will impact how instruction is provided. Yellow (precautionary) schools open with mandatory weekly testing of students and teachers/staff for in-person settings; orange (warning) and red (cluster identified) require school buildings to be closed; instruction is remote only.

In the event that our region moves into an orange or red zone, the Lewiston-Porter campus would close and instruction for all students would move to remote only. Students currently in the hybrid model would receive synchronous instruction on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, with Wednesday as a day of asynchronous instruction (providing opportunity for office hours, tutoring and parent conferences).

Students currently enrolled in the remote model will continue to follow their current schedule of remote learning.

In order to monitor which schools are located in each zone (red, orange and yellow), the New York state "COVID-19 Report Card" will now display the zone each school is located in directly on the dashboard. A link to the "COVID-19 Report Card" ([https://schoolcovi-](https://schoolcovi)

[dreportcard.health.ny.gov/#home](https://schoolcovidreportcard.health.ny.gov/#home)) is on the district homepage (www.lew-port.com). Visit the governor's website to read more about the COVID-19 micro-cluster metrics strategy (<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-details-covid-19-micro-cluster-metrics>), and continue to follow the updates and notifications from Superintendent Paul Casseri.

Lewiston-Porter continues to take every precaution to prevent the spread of COVID-19 within the district's schools. Recently, the Niagara County Health Department offered voluntary on-site rapid testing at school districts throughout Niagara County. Lewiston-Porter welcomed the opportunity, and NCDOH tested our employees (voluntarily) for COVID-19.

Testing took place on Oct. 22 and we were pleased to report we had no positive cases with the 117 employees who were tested. We would like to thank Niagara County Health Commissioner Dan Stapleton and his team. There was great coordination between NCDOH and the Lew-Port team (Dr. Patricia Grupka, Kathy Moore, Paul Feathers, Rich Salverson, Donna Fallesen, Anne Vougt and the L-P buildings and grounds staff) to pull this testing protocol off, and it pro-

ceeded without a hitch.

All testing took place at the district offices and it was set up in a very safe and efficient manner.

The high level of participation by Lew-Port employees shows the Lewiston-Porter community how seriously we take the safety of our staff and students. The results also reveal that, because of our diligence around reopening protocols, Lewiston-Porter schools are safe places for our students to learn.

If a case had been discovered, NCDOH would have moved quickly to begin the contact tracing and subsequent quarantine and isolation of staff and students, as needed. Depending on the building impacted, families within that building would have been notified and, if the issue was more widespread, the entire school community would be notified of the next steps. The extent of notification is always based on impact on a building or the district, and is always respectful of confidentiality as it relates to HIPAA and FERPA laws.

We will continue to work closely with the Niagara County Department of Health and keep you "In the Loop" as we head into the cold winter months.

Stay safe and stay well, Lewiston-Porter!

Election Day results in Niagara County

BY TERRY DUFFY
Editor-in-Chief

While the presidential elections remain undecided with three key "swing states" still in contention as of Thursday afternoon, the results were pretty much determined Tuesday as far as Niagara County races were concerned.

According to unofficial totals by the Niagara County Board of Elections as of Tuesday evening (reflecting early voting as well as Election Day results), the final tallies mostly went as expected.

Leading off, the incumbent team of GOP President Donald Trump and Vice President Michel Pence won the county by a count of 51,355 (58.33%) over Democratic challengers Joseph Biden and Kamala Harris, who netted 34,809 (39.54%). However, Biden-Harris scored the victory as expected in New York state, by a count of 3,694,125 (55.7%) to 2,848,068 (43%) for Trump-Pence, according to Associated Press election results. With 78% of statewide districts reporting, Biden-Harris took the victory and New York's 29 electoral votes, reflecting primarily downstate

NYC and bigger city results.

In Republican stronghold District 27, GOP newcomer Chris Jacobs, who won the congressional seat in a special election last June, cemented the district this time with 36,473 votes in Niagara County (64.03%) to 19,772 (34.71%) for Democratic challenger Nathan McMurray. Libertarian candidate Duane Whitmer netted 706 votes (1.24%), and there were 11 write-in votes.

Results for District 26 in the county saw Democratic incumbent Brian Higgins netting 15,252 votes (57.66%) to 10,787 (40.78%) of GOP challenger Ricky Donovan Sr. Green Party candidate Michael Raleigh took 402 votes (1.24%) and there was 12 write-in votes.

Acting Niagara County Sheriff Michael Filicetti won his race handily on all major party lines with 76,351 votes (91.76%). Working Families challenger Brian Gear netted 6,808 (8.18%). There were 50 write-in votes in the race.

"With the majority of districts reporting, I would like to thank the voters of Niagara County for their support in making me the 57th sheriff of Niagara County," Filice-

tti said on his Facebook page. "I am truly humbled and promise to serve with honor and integrity."

In the race for Niagara County district attorney, Brian Seaman of Youngstown won the office, with 51,133 votes (62.12%) logged on the GOP and major party lines. Democratic challenger John Ceretto II had 31,145 votes (37.84%), and there were 31 write-in votes.

"Thank you to everyone who voted for me," Seaman said on his Facebook page. "I have received such tremendous support and truly appreciate the confidence placed in me for this important office."

Seaman looks to replace Democrat Caroline Wojtaszek, who is set to become the next Niagara County Court judge after besting Republican Michael Benedict by a margin of 67,797 to 14,650.

In state races, county voters returned incumbents to office for the one Senate seat and in three of the four Assembly races.

GOP Sen. Robert Ort, who ran uncontested, won reelection with 65,700 votes (99.30%). There were 466 write-in votes cast. For State Assembly, major party candidates

Michael Norris won the 144th District in an uncontested race, with 25,948 votes (99.55%), with 118 write-ins, while Angelo Morinello, also uncontested, won the 145th District in an uncontested race, with 30,113 votes (99.55%), with 118 write-ins.

Meanwhile Republican/Conservative newcomer Robert Pecoraro of North Tonawanda won the 140th District with 4,482 votes (56.53%) over Democratic/Working Families/Independent William Conrad with 3,310 votes (41.75%) and Green Party candidate Anthony Baney, with 134 votes (1.69%). There were two write-in votes cast.

And in the 146th District, Republican/Conservative/Independent Robin Wolfgang won the seat with 2,341 votes (68.17%) to 1,067 votes (31.07%) for incumbent Democratic/Working Families Karen McMahon. Green Party choice Ruben Cartagena Jr. took third with 25 votes (0.73%), and there was one write-in.

For more county voting results, visit the Niagara County Board of Elections website.

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