

**Poland Regional High School**  
**School Board Report**  
**November 2020**

### **Staff Updates**

We are fully staffed up and have two consistent substitute teachers, so we are feeling lucky.

When we had the COVID positive test we had seven teachers and two ed techs who were required to self-quarantine from Tuesday, October 13-22. This presented a problem on October, 16 and we could not open school. We were able to cover all teachers for the remainder of the quarantine period, however, with a big thanks to our students for working with their teachers and Patrick Flynn and I to keep teaching a learning moving forward.

We have adjusted some of our practices to try to minimize the number of teachers who are required to quarantine in the future. Teachers have been directed to not visit the classroom of a colleague if they are not assigned there. We typically combine Roundtables when a teacher is out, but will stop doing that as well. Finally, if possible, when staff members are needed to cover a class, we are directing them to supervise the students from the hallway to avoid being in the room and minimize close contacts. Lisa Storer reported to the school community on Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> that the quarantine period had ended with no new cases and no spread of the virus in the school from the positive case. We are elated that our safety measures worked!

### **Teaching and Learning**

Students and teachers have developed a good rhythm for the teaching and learning cycle. It is a completely new way to work for teachers, and so the adjustment was considerable in the first month of school. Planning for in-person instruction, as well as monitoring and responding to students completing remote work, lengthens the day and has teachers dividing their thinking process between two different groups of students.

The decision to have the off-cohort students working asynchronously was really helpful, however. Tales of high school teachers in neighboring schools constantly trying to “zoom” students into class with the in-person students, confirms for me that our decision to avoid this was the right one. We want to do the in-person part of each student’s week really well, so keeping teachers focused on that is key. Our students definitely want to be in school, though, and the overwhelming reaction to our four-day shutdown two weeks ago was disappointment.

We are planning to have a small group of students come into school an additional day to support their progress in their classes. This group, known as +1 students, will be here on one of their off- cohort days to help them get their remote work done and get caught up. At this time, the list numbers about 51 students divided over four different days. With our county continuing in Green status, our athletic teams have been able to compete throughout the fall. Our kids have benefited tremendously from this activity, and have done a great job following safety guidelines.

During the month of October, we have been conducting school-wide lessons in Roundtable about the election and voting rights. Last week, Poland Deputy Town Manager Nikki Pratt was our guest speaker to teach students about their voting rights and how voting works. Ken Chutchian served as moderator in a webinar that we broadcast to every Roundtable class. The information was timely and helpful, with many students commenting that they enjoyed the presentation. A big thanks to Nikki for taking an hour out of her day to help us educate our future citizens!

### **Facilities**

We had enough desks to set each classroom up for appropriate social distancing requirements as dictated by the DOE’s framework. We were able to use tables which had been removed from classrooms to set up the cafe and lobby to accommodate 50 students for lunch in each space. A small number of students are eating in classrooms. Tony and his crew continue to rock it when it comes to keep the building clean!

### **Events**

We were able to schedule and complete virtual Student Led Conferences during the week of October 19. Our athletic season will come to an end with the end of the month. As of 10/27 our student athletes were able to participate in 33 competitions. We are grateful for the support of the board for allowing this to happen.