

November 18, 2020

Dear Parents and Staff,

In my letter dated November 17th, I noted that I would assess the status of all of our buildings in the 24 hours following that communication. After careful consideration, we will be shifting to our Remote Learning Model beginning Monday, November 23rd through December 4th (week following Thanksgiving).

We just had new reports of cases at Newtown High School and within our Community Partnerships Program in the Department of Special Education resulting in the quarantining of another 24 adults. In total, approximately 95 staff members are now quarantined, including teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators and other support personnel. While we have no evidence of in-school transmission, the decision to transition to full remote learning is driven by the pattern of rapidly increasing community spread. When this impacts staff and their ability to operate effectively as a system, we need to pause until we can resume in an effective and safe learning environment.

I want to mention that both staff and administrators have been stellar in their efforts to help out colleagues and cover absences in each of our buildings, but there is a point in which this impedes a productive and safe learning environment. Timelines for COVID testing and receiving results are an added challenge. Following the Thanksgiving holiday, we would have additional time to assess staffing needs and additional COVID cases impacting our schools. We will continue to work with our local health director to monitor cases, review trends, and make decisions in the best interest of our students and staff.

You will receive information from your building leaders with a schedule for the 7-1/2 days in the Remote Learning Model, as well as information about sending home devices and other materials that students may need. Additionally, information for our free lunch program distribution will be sent to all families. Buildings will remain open for teachers, administrators, custodians, and secretarial staff. If something is needed, please don't hesitate to contact us.

I hope you understand that our priority continues to be the well-being of our students and staff. While these are not easy decisions, we must be able to operate effectively and safely moving forward. Stay well and enjoy time with your families.

Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue, Superintendent