

January 7, 2021

Good afternoon,

I hope everyone had a restful holiday break. We have many important updates regarding our hybrid schedule, school calendar, protocols, weather, family resource, and our school response to yesterday's events at the capitol.

Ramping Up In-Person Learning

The hybrid model had previously been scheduled to continue through January 18. We have made the decision to extend the hybrid model through Friday, January 22. This will give us more time to monitor COVID-19 positive cases that have followed the holiday break. Beginning on Monday, January 25, our plan will be to have all students throughout the district start back to school 4 days per week for in-person learning. If your child has opted out, you are not required to have your child start attending now, unless you choose to change their learning model.

A few reminders for parents as we increase the number of students in our buildings:

- When we move back to a 4 day a week schedule, Wednesdays will remain remote learning days. These days will primarily be independent learning activities. They are still school days and students are expected to log in and/or complete assigned work.
- We will have reduced space between students in classrooms as students return.
- All other mitigation strategies, such as mask wearing, hand hygiene, ensuring adequate ventilation and staying home when sick will continue to be in place, following the protocols we have established to this point.
- We will continue to have 6 ft between students for mask breaks or when they are eating.
- Our cleaning and disinfecting protocols are following DPH guidelines and will continue.
- Students will have assigned seats on the buses to help with contact tracing if needed — please help your children understand the reasons for assigned seats as we need everyone's cooperation with this.
- As grade levels are scheduled to return, we will no longer have a hybrid option.
- Students must wear a mask on the bus for the entire bus ride.
- Transportation times for pick-up and drop may vary slightly as a result of increased numbers.

We also need to be aware that the number of close contacts from one case would likely be higher with increased numbers of students — the result would be a higher number of students or staff requiring quarantine for 14 days. As we have learned during this COVID-19 pandemic, decisions made and protocols in place will continue to be fluid and can change at any time based on increases with positive cases within the community and school. Families need to identify a plan in case your child has to quarantine or be part of a whole class that must be home for a period of time.

If any families would like to change the learning model for their children (in-person to remote or remote to in-person) we ask you to contact the main office of your child's school. If you have any questions, please contact your child's school.

School Calendar, Academic Quarters, and HS Mid-Terms

The second and third academic quarters have been extended by one week. The revised end date for the second quarter is January 29. The updated school calendar can be found on our website. High school mid-terms have been moved to the week of January 25, and the high school principal, Mrs. Anderson, will be messaging parents with the updated schedule.

Important COVID-19 testing and quarantine information

Parents, please ensure you have updated your school nurse if your child tested positive for COVID-19 or is self-quarantining based on an exposure to ensure that school nurses have accurate information. If your child is tested for COVID-19 — whether it be COVID-19 testing for travel or for illness — your child cannot return to school until their school has received the results of their COVID-19 test.

The CT Department of Public Health recommends changing the quarantine period for persons known to be close contacts with no symptoms of cases of COVID-19 to 10 days. Based on the updated guidance from CDC, the Connecticut DPH also recommends that when diagnostic testing resources are sufficient and available, the quarantine period for persons known to be close contacts with no symptoms of COVID-19 can end after Day 7, contingent on specific conditions being met. The decision for school districts to make the change with protocols involving the number of days necessary for quarantine are made under the guidance of their local department of public health (DPH). We are currently in communication with our local DPH to determine if East Windsor should be revising the number of days required for quarantined. Although no decision has been made at this time, we anticipate having an update by next week. Until such time that we announce a decision, we will continue to enforce a 14 day quarantine period.

We also need to remind families that anyone who travels to a state listed on the Governor's travel advisory must quarantine for 14 days prior to returning to school. Please check the CT travel ban website (<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/travel>). The states under travel advisory are color-coded in red. If the state turns red while you are traveling, you must quarantine before returning to school.

Following these protocols are critical to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and we ask that you not return to school after travel without observing the quarantine. We appreciate your assistance.

This week, we had two positive student cases at Broad Brook School and three positive cases at the Middle School. None of the positive cases had any close contacts. Our current practice is to notify anyone personally who is determined to be a close contact. Anyone who is not a close contact will need to continue to utilize the same mitigation strategies as we do every day - mask wearing, hand washing, and maintaining personal space as they are able. We continue to monitor our ventilation systems as well as clean and disinfect our buildings. At this time, the Department of Public Health is delayed in notification to districts and as a result we do not have an update on current cases within the community.

As a reminder, parents are encouraged to reach out to their child's teachers or building administrators if their child is disengaged from their school work during the pandemic. We want to collaborate with you to support your child. We ask if you receive a phone call or email from a teacher or administrator, please respond as soon as you are able. We realize that families are very busy but would love to work with families to keep our students successful in their academics.

Opportunity for Families to receive Professional Support on Student Learning

The CT State Department of Education, in partnership with the State Educational Resource Center, will be offering a series of opportunities for families to engage in further conversation on topics related to their

children's education. The next in the series will be held January 12th and is called, **A Place at the Table: A Parent-to-Parent Conversation about the Importance of Attendance and Supporting Our Kids in School**. This time together will offer families and key school partners the chance to learn about meaningful strategies and key resources to help connect students with learning. This webinar will offer live co-presenter translation in Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic. Please access the link to learn more information https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/COVID-19/professionalsupportseries_series21.pdf

Weather

The Department of Education has given Superintendent's the ability to decide if we will have remote learning days rather than traditional snow days for this school year. We intend to use that option when feasible and when the weather is not impacting internet access with potential power outages. In addition, we will prioritize in-person learning in our decision making when weather permits, as we will opt for a delayed start over cancellation of in-person learning for a remote learning day. We will be reminding students to take home laptops when poor weather is in the forecast. Please encourage your children to remember their laptops as well. If we have remote learning days, rather than traditional snow days, we will not have to extend the school year in June.

School response regarding the events at the Capitol

We are all aware of the social unrest that occurred yesterday at our Nation's capital, and I want to let families know that our teachers and staff worked to maintain our daily routines and structure. Our goal was to maintain a sense of calm and stability without denying or minimizing yesterday's events. Staff worked to remain as neutral as possible, and they refrained from engaging in dialogue since it is then difficult to remain neutral. We did not try to explain what happened, and instead focused on acknowledging that events took place, expressing that we understand it is a difficult time for all of us, and that we are going to continue to move forward. Students were instructed that if they need to discuss their thoughts or feelings further, they should speak privately with their teacher and ask to see a counselor or someone they feel safe speaking with.

Finally, I want to thank everyone for their flexibility, support and communication as we continue to work together to support our students during this pandemic.

Take care!

Patrick Tudryn, Ed.D

Assistant Superintendent