



November 24, 2020

Dear SDOW Parents and Guardians:

As we head into the 2020 holiday season, we have a little more to think about as compared to years past. I also know that we are all beyond tired of our current reality and the precautions associated with the pandemic. None the less, we must remain resilient during these trying times and do what is best to protect the people we know and don't know, and most importantly our loved ones.

From a school schedule standpoint, we are currently experiencing operational stress but have worked hard to manage in the best way possible. Although our goal would be to remain in Scenario 2: Yellow (on-campus full attendance for grades K-6 and hybrid schedule grades 7-12) through first semester, we will have to closely monitor our ability to staff classrooms, buildings, and schools within our District over the holiday season. In addition, we will analyze our staff and student COVID-19 positivity rates by building. This data will be used to make decisions regarding any necessary shifts from yellow to red (virtual) and/or to close individual schools or the entire District for a period of time. Over the Thanksgiving break, families should make some contingency plans in the event our schedule must change as described above. We would not want anyone to be surprised by a decision that may have to be made quickly due to circumstances beyond our control. Please make plans for childcare and any online delivery of instruction that may be required.

Our previous experience has shown that after holiday gatherings and long weekends, we experience higher positivity and quarantine rates due to increased community transmission. Considering Franklin County and the other counties within our boundaries are already seeing significant community spread, we are concerned that the conditions may worsen in the coming weeks.

Below you will find protocols that we will need to continue following while in school or at all school events:

- Face coverings will be required for grades K-12, all staff and visitors
- Classroom cohorts in elementary school settings, social distancing where possible at the secondary schools (7-12) due to hybrid schedule

- Cleaning and disinfecting as aligned to CDC guidelines
- Frequent hand washing or sanitizing
- Limiting crowd sizes and gatherings
- Do not attend school or go out in public if you are experiencing any symptoms (mild or severe)

Schools are among some of the safest places for students due to these increased protocols. This is why we suggest these same types of precautions be taken outside of school as well. This pandemic has created many disruptions and we appreciate the role each person has taken to mitigate risks, provide education, and to remain flexible as the conditions change. If the School District of Washington experiences operational stress that prevents us from safely providing services to our students and staff, we will consider a change in schedule for a period of time. Should this become necessary, a call blast will be sent. In the meantime, please make contingency plans for your family just in case.

Please make every effort to remain healthy, and to keep those around you safe as well. We hope you have a Happy Thanksgiving and we appreciate everyone's cooperation.

Take care,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori VanLeer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Dr. Lori VanLeer**

*Superintendent of Schools*

220 Locust Street

Washington, MO 63090

636-231-2006

Twitter: @SDOWsupt